



Living In Sydney: Everything You Need To Know

By: Ava Smith

Abstract

Living in Sydney offers a dynamic blend of cosmopolitan lifestyle, stunning natural beauty, and rich cultural experiences. As Australia's largest city, Sydney boasts iconic landmarks like the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge, pristine beaches such as Bondi and Manly, and expansive parks, including the Royal Botanic Garden. The city's diverse population contributes to a vibrant culinary scene and an array of cultural festivals. Excellent public transport, world-class education institutions, and a strong job market in sectors like finance, technology, and creative industries make it an attractive destination for professionals and families alike. Despite a high cost of living, Sydney's high quality of life, temperate climate, and myriad recreational opportunities make it a coveted place to reside.



1. Introduction

Sydney is a vibrant metropolis that seamlessly combines urban sophistication with natural splendor. Residents enjoy a temperate climate, with warm summers and mild winters, making it ideal for outdoor activities year-round. The city is renowned for its diverse neighborhoods, each offering unique experiences, from the bustling streets of the CBD and the historic charm of The Rocks to the bohemian vibe of Newtown and the laid-back beach culture of Bondi. Sydney's public transport system, including trains, buses, and ferries, makes navigating the city convenient, while its healthcare and education systems are among the best in the country. Despite the higher cost of living, Sydney's thriving economy, multicultural society, and numerous leisure options create an enviable lifestyle for its residents.

2. Awesome Reasons to Live in Sydney



If you're thinking of studying and living in Sydney, you probably have a lot of questions. Why move to Sydney? Is Sydney a good place to live? Is Sydney safe to live in? Well, wonder no more because we have the answers! Beautiful beaches, incredible nature scenes, a thriving nightlife – there are countless amazing reasons to live and study in Sydney. Keep reading to discover our top 10.

1. Sydney is home to some of the world's leading education providers

Sydney houses some of the best educational institutions on the planet. Here you'll find some of the world's top universities, which regularly rank in the top 200 in the QS World University Rankings and the Times Higher Education World Rankings. But that's not at all – Sydney is also home to several TAFEs, VET training providers and pathway providers like the Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT).

That means you won't have to search for long to find the right course or degree to suit your learning needs.

2. Sydney's landmarks are rich in history

You're likely familiar with two of Sydney's most world-famous landmarks: the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. But there's even more to discover!

You can take historical tours (and ghost tours!) around The Rocks, get 'shipwrecked' at old Convict-era shipping yard Cockatoo Island, or take part in the Sydney City Museum Crawl to learn about Australia's history. The tour takes you to the Australian Museum, the National

Maritime Museum, the Art Gallery of NSW, and the Museum of Contemporary Art. Best of all? It's not just for tourists – the crawl is popular all year round with Australian locals!

Many of these landmarks are within walking distance from several education providers in the CBD, such as SIBT. In other words, when you choose to study here, you'll have an incredible backdrop to enjoy.

3. The culture is vibrant and exciting

When you choose to live and study in Sydney, you'll be spoiled for choice of fun things to do. Take a wander around the thriving city parks, bars, cafes and entertainment precincts. Each month, you'll be sure to stumble across a wide variety of exciting cultural events such as markets, dance events, art exhibitions or fireworks displays. Plus, most events are completely free!

Prominent festivals throughout the year include The Sydney Festival, Vivid Sydney Festival, Sydney WorldPride, the Royal Easter Show and Sculpture by the Sea.

Plus, education providers typically host on-campus activities and events throughout the year to bring students together. For example, SIBT regularly hosts movie nights, noodle and doodle activities, pool competitions and so much more. You can stay up to date on SIBT's calendar of events here.

4. Sydney has breathtaking natural wonders



If you study in Sydney at one of the local universities, chances are there's a beautiful patch of green grass close by – perfect for picnics and outdoor study sessions.

Settle down at the Royal Botanic Gardens for a chilled study session with some breathtaking waterfront views. Alternatively, relax amongst sculptures and flowering lilies at Wendy's Secret Garden, or the tranquil surrounds of the Chinese Garden of Friendship, right by Sydney's Chinatown. Centennial Parklands is also a beautiful study space.

A stone's throw from the SIBT campus, you'll find Hyde Park, Sydney's oldest park (and one of its most stunning). The 16-hectare park is directly next to SIBT, meaning you can be there in less than a minute's walk. Here you'll find historical attractions (such as the Anzac Memorial and Archibald Fountain), shaded areas to relax and plenty of lush greenery.

You can also take a day trip out of the city and visit some of the beautiful national parks just outside of Sydney including the Blue Mountains, the Royal National Park, Wollemi National Park, Yengo National Park or Nattai National Park.

5. The beaches are just brilliant

If you opt to study in Sydney, it goes without saying that not all your time will be spent in the classroom. In your spare time, there's no better place to be than one of Sydney's gorgeous beaches.

Sydney beaches are famous all around the world thanks to their beauty and great surfing and swimming opportunities (and that's not to mention the amazing Sydney weather!). Head to the Eastern Suburbs and tackle the scenic Coojee to Bondi Beach Walk, stopping for a scuba-dive at Clovelly Beach, 'local secret' Gordons Bay, or the popular Bondi Beach. Otherwise, catch a ferry from Circular Quay to Manly Beach for a leisurely stroll around its beachside cafes.

6. Sydney is a thriving transport hub

As a major city, Sydney is very well-connected. So, if you choose to live and study in Sydney, you'll have no trouble getting around. You'll find buses, trains and ferries that take you through the city, and to mountain getaways, the countryside and beyond. Conveniently, trains also run from Sydney Airport to Sydney's Central Station.

Generally, Sydney's train, bus and ferry services operate regularly, running late into the night. Make sure you download the Trip Planner app on your phone to properly plan your trip and get yourself an Opal card to pay for your ride. There are now daily, weekly and weekend travel caps for Opal card users, making public transport in Sydney more affordable. This means you'll pay no more than \$8.40 a day, \$25 a week or \$4.20 over the weekend as a concession no matter how many times you travel.

Conveniently located in the city centre, SIBT is situated next to a variety of public transport lines. Some of these routes lead directly to the previously mentioned beaches, making it super easy for you to enjoy them.

7. Sydney is a multicultural place

Sydney is home to a large and varied population. The city's Chinese community is particularly vibrant, with ever-bustling Chinatown a great spot for cultural events and markets throughout the year. The Chinese New Year Celebrations are worth checking out, with a massive parade, lion dancers, art installations and the Southern Hemisphere's largest dragon boat races on show. You'll also find a wide range of multicultural eateries, cultural events and annual festivals in Sydney, including Korean, Japanese, Indian, European, Middle Eastern, Malaysian, and more.

8. Plenty of employment opportunities



Being a large, central city hub with a big population, there's plenty of work to be found in Sydney. The city is Australia's economic powerhouse, and more than 40 per cent of Australia's top 500 companies, 90 per cent of international banks, 60 per cent of information and communication and technology companies, and 50 per cent of professional service firms have their global or regional headquarters in Sydney.

Many Sydney-based organisations actively look for student volunteers and host frequent Sydney student society meet-ups, international student gatherings and events. So, you'll have plenty of networking opportunities as a student if you seek them out. In other words, choosing to study in Sydney could be the first step in building a successful career!

Your education provider can also help you identify and leverage these employment opportunities. For instance, SIBT features a dedicated industry placement officer to support you in starting your career on the right foot.

9. Sydney is Australia's most sustainable city

Sydney takes sustainability very seriously – and it shows. The city was ranked #2 in the Asia-Pacific region and #1 in Australia (Perth is a close #4!) for sustainability in the Knight Frank Asia-Pacific Sustainability Index in 2022.

When ranking cities, research found Sydney scored top points on the number of green spaces available, the number of green-rated commercial buildings (think reduced potential environmental impact, lessened energy, water and material resource consumption), and how well the city is planned and managed to address the pressures of urbanisation.

Sydney's education providers are equally committed to sustainability. SIBT and Western Sydney University are two perfect examples. These partner institutions ranked #1 in the world for commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2022.

10. Sydney is super safe



Moving to a new country can be intimidating. So, it's perfectly normal to want the reassurance that your new home is safe. When you study in Sydney, you'll enjoy the peace

of mind that you're in one of the safest places in Australia. In fact, Sydney was ranked the fourth safest city in the world in 2021!

Education providers also take significant measures to ensure the safety of their students. SIBT features 24-hour security, including video surveillance and an onsite security team to assist you with safety around campus, lost property, theft and medical emergencies.

Plus, as we mentioned, Sydney is very multicultural. With such a diverse population, there is widespread acceptance and tolerance for people of all backgrounds. Ask any local, "Is Sydney safe to live in?" and we're sure they'll answer with an enthusiastic yes!

3. The Best Value Suburb To Live In Sydney



Sydney house hunters pay a premium to purchase close to the city centre, but there are pockets where buyers can get better bang for their buck, even by moving just one suburb over.

Homebuyers looking to maximise their budget, while remaining relatively close to the CBD, could turn to often overlooked suburbs like Canterbury, Arncliffe and East Ryde, which have the lowest house prices per square metre within 10 kilometres of the city centre.

Homes in Canterbury, 9.9 kilometres south-west of the CBD as the crow flies, offer the best value for money within that radius, trading for a median price of \$3,199 per square metre last year, and offering a median block size of 453 square metres.

Next was Arncliffe, where house hunters paid a median of \$3,635 per square metre, then East Ryde (\$3,645) and Middle Cove (\$3,656), where homes are more expensive but sit on larger blocks.

When measured by sale price the cheapest suburb within the 10-kilometre radius was Sydenham, which has a median house price of \$1.28 million, but a much higher rate per square metre, at \$7,465, due to smaller block sizes.

Domain's chief of research and economics Dr Nicola Powell said the per square metre price for properties peaked in inner-city suburbs, where land commanded the greatest premiums and the more limited number of houses sat on smaller blocks.

"It largely follows the rule of thumb that the further away you go the cheaper it becomes because land comes at less of a premium ... but this [data] allows you to identify those areas that are maybe lower priced [per square metre] than neighbouring suburbs," she said.

The median price per square metre in Canterbury for instance, is about 18 per cent lower than for properties in neighbouring Earlwood (\$3,894). Prices in Earlwood are about 46 per cent lower than prices in neighbouring Marrickville (\$7,186), where buyers pay higher prices for houses on smaller blocks. Marrickville prices in turn, are 20 per cent lower than in neighbouring St Peters (\$9018).

All suburbs within 10 kilometres of the city centre, were well above the Sydney wide median of \$2466 per square metre — which increased about 140 per cent over the decade.

Buyers' agent Hamada Alameddine of BuyerX was increasingly seeing inner west clients, particularly young families, turn to suburbs like Ashbury, Ashfield, Arncliffe, Earlwood and Canterbury to get better value for their money.

"A lot of people are moving further west ... they want more space because they're looking to start a family or have young kids," he said.

"In that \$1.5 million to \$2 million range in those suburbs, we're talking about them getting a three to four-bedroom house on 350 to 500 square metres."

While buyers were getting more space, the compromise was often a longer commute time to work, shops and other amenities. But some suburbs struck a good balance.

"You're always going to make compromises [when on a budget], you're going to give up one thing to get something better."

Canterbury local Sonia Battistini is selling her three-bedroom home, but hopes her family can stay in the area.

She praises the suburb for its local shopping, cafés, pool, ice rink, access to the Cooks River walking track and greenery, as well as its proximity to inner west suburbs such as Marrickville, Dulwich Hill and Summer Hill.

The train line offers an easy commute to the city, and Canterbury station will be part of the metro upgrade project.

“What’s great is you’ve got the inner west lifestyle, but you don’t have the inner west price tag,” she said. “From an affordability perspective that’s a great positive, but it definitely is on the rise.”

She has watched the neighbourhood grow and flourish since moving in seven years ago, and believes it’s a suburb to watch.

“We really enjoy the area. It’s a bit of a hidden gem,” she said.

Her agent, Ray White Drummoyne’s Mario Carbone, said Canterbury is only one suburb from the inner west but is often associated with Bankstown because it sits in the local government area of Canterbury-Bankstown.

“Bankstown is a lot further away than what Canterbury is. People tend to overlook it for that reason,” he said.



“Now we’re finding that people are getting priced out of Hurlstone Park, Earlwood, Marrickville, Petersham, Dulwich Hill - it’s essentially the next suburb and people are starting to see the value in it.”

He said there has been little consistency in sale prices lately, which can vary depending on the pocket of Canterbury, but stock levels are very low and the area is tightly held.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if in the next couple of years we start to see it really take off,” he said.

Blacktown

Blacktown is a beautiful city that leaves visitors mesmerised with its motorsports scene, artistic expressions and wildlife. It is also famous for housing the only drive-in theatre in Sydney and hosting food night markets that add glamour to its nightlife. With a vast number of shops, restaurants and hotels in the city, it has become the perfect place for families and working professionals. The median house price for a 3-bedroom property in the city stands at \$925,000, and rent is \$550 per week. Thus, many renters keep moving houses in the vicinity. Our affordable service has become the top choice for them because of the assurance of deposit retrieval.

4. Cost Of Living In Sydney



Plan for your everyday expenses and accommodation

Understand the costs you're likely to face as a student living in Sydney, so you can keep to a realistic budget.

Whether you're moving here from overseas, interstate, or you've grown up in Sydney, there are various weekly and monthly outgoings you'll need to budget for.

The Australian government website MoneySmart has lots of information and advice about a range of financial issues, including a section specifically for students on how to live on student budget.

The Australian government website Study in Australia also estimates general living costs for students. We have listed some categories below to help you plan ahead.

Food and groceries

A weekly grocery bill for one person is usually between \$80–\$280. You can save money by buying groceries at supermarkets including Coles, Woolworths and Aldi. Shopping at fresh food markets like Paddy's Market can save you money too.

Buying lunch on campus is a more expensive option, with most meals costing \$10–15 each. Join the USU Access Rewards program and get a 10 percent discount to purchase food and drinks at USU food outlets on campus.

Lifestyle expenses



Put aside around \$80–150 per week for entertainment and socialising. Lots of places including movie cinemas offer student discounts so keep your student card with you.

Don't forget to budget for other incidental expenses like clothes, shoes and toiletries.

Expenses may vary depending on your lifestyle.

Academic support

You may need to purchase equipment for university, including stationery and study materials such as textbooks and laboratory coats. Essential items are listed in your Unit of Study Outline. Have at least \$500 available at the beginning of each semester and keep an eye out for second-hand textbooks (make sure they are the right edition) and supplies to save money.

Printing and photocopying cost around 10 cents per page.

According to Tutor Finder, private tutoring costs range from \$50–80 an hour, but mentoring support may be available through the University.

Travel

Access public transport with an Opal card. You can order a card online or buy from a registered retailer. Single trip tickets are available at retailers and train stations.

If you're a full-time domestic student, you may be eligible for a concession Opal card. Have your student card with you as proof whenever you travel.

International students are currently not eligible for concession tickets.

Insurance



Overseas Student Health Cover is compulsory for international students. Costs will depend on your insurance provider and your level of cover. Check with your insurance provider for rates for your selected cover.

You may have additional costs including fees for specialists and prescription medications.

Alternative forms of coverage are available for non-student visa holders. Please check with a provider for details.

Childcare

According to Care for Kids:

The average cost of long daycare (8am to 6pm) in Sydney are approximately between \$70–190 per day. Some students may be eligible for government subsidies.

Before school and after school care costs around \$15–30 per day.

Public school tuition is free for Australian permanent residents however, uniforms and levies can cost about \$500 a year.

Private schools may charge additional fees.

If you're an international student with school-age dependents in Australia, visit the Department of Education for approximate costs of schooling.

5. Finding The Right Place To Live In Sydney



When you arrive in a new country, it can be difficult to find the ideal place to live. You need to be able to find the right type of accommodation for you, at the at the right price.

If you plan to share a house with others, you will also need to find housemates who will be easy to live with... housemates who may even become lifelong friends.

So, we're here to help you with some advice on finding the right home, and to make sure you know your rights as a housing tenant in Australia.

Renting in Australia

As an international student in Australia, you can rent or 'lease' a property by yourself, or with student friends or housemates. You may also choose to live with local Australians so you can also experience a new culture and community at home.

Real estate agents

One option is to apply for rental accommodation managed by a real estate agent who will also manage your rental agreement during your tenancy.

A real estate agent's office will usually respond promptly to your enquiries and talk to the property owner on your behalf.

Private rentals



You could also apply for accommodation called a private rental, where the owner of the house deals directly with you and manages the property during your tenancy.

It is important to be cautious when looking at private rentals not arranged by registered real estate agents. All property owners must strictly follow regulations on renter conditions and property repairs.

When you are in a private rental arrangement, it may be harder to get quick responses, including when requesting any urgent repairs. So, it's important to understand your rights and entitlements from the very start of your accommodation search.

Paying a bond



If you rent a house, you will need to pay a security deposit or 'bond' (which is usually equivalent to four weeks' rent). You will also need to pay some rent in advance (usually to cover the first four weeks of your tenancy).

Before you apply for accommodation, carefully check the bond and lease agreements, terms and conditions.

Bond money is held by the relevant state or territory government authority in order to potentially pay for any damages that you, your housemates or house guests may cause to the rental property during your tenancy. Some, or all, of the bond may be refunded to you when your lease ends if there has been no damage done beyond 'fair wear and tear'.

Important things to note:

Do not give bond money directly to a housemate as you will not be legally protected if they decide not to return the money.

If it is a private rental arrangement, make sure that the bond money is given to the residential bond authority in your Australian state or territory and not directly to the owner of the property. Your property manager will give you an official form to fill out in order to provide your bond.

How to find a rental property and housemates

Firstly, you will need to decide if you want to start a new lease on a rental property or move into an existing 'sharehouse':

1. Starting a new lease



Signing a new lease can require more paperwork than moving into an existing sharehouse, but you will have more control over your living situation and be able to choose your future housemates from the start.

You can visit real estate agent websites and offices in the local property area to find a listing of available properties to rent.

Even when you have found your preferred accommodation, most real estate agents will require you to visit the property in-person before you apply to live there. This is recommended, so that you have an opportunity to check:

The condition of the property – does it need any urgent repairs?

Safety features – do the doors and windows lock properly?

The neighbourhood – do you feel comfortable in the area?

Location – is it easy to get to your campus, is it close to public transport and shops?

Surrounding noise levels – will you be able to study in that location?

2. Joining an existing sharehouse

If you are planning to move into a household looking for new housemates (or you want to promote a spare room in your house), websites such as flatmates.com.au and Flatmate Finders can be a useful place to start.

When it comes to finding the right housemates for your home, these are some questions you may want to ask them:

How often do you normally clean?

Have you had any difficulty paying rent in the past?

What do you like to do on the weekends and in the evenings?

Do you like to cook? Do you have any pets?

How long are you planning to stay here?

If you're applying to live in a room in an existing household, they might ask you the same things, so it's a good idea to think about your answers in advance.

Even when joining an existing sharehouse, make sure that you are on the lease agreement so that you and your financial bond are protected when you leave the house. Do not give your bond money to one of your housemates.

How do I fill out a rental application?



The real estate agent who is advertising and managing the property you're applying for will tell you what you need to do.

This will include completing an application form. The information you will need to provide may include copies of personal identification, information on your rental history, and some evidence that you will be able to pay your rent, such as an employment contract or pay slips.

The rental market can be competitive, especially in larger cities, so it's a good idea to keep checking vacancy listings and apply for your preferred accommodation as quickly as possible. It also helps to add a cover letter so you can why you want this particular property and why you are a suitable tenant.

Conclusion

In conclusion, living in Sydney provides an exceptional quality of life characterized by a blend of urban excitement and natural beauty. While the cost of living can be high, the city compensates with a robust job market, excellent public services, and a diverse cultural landscape. From its iconic landmarks and beautiful beaches to its vibrant neighborhoods and rich array of dining and entertainment options, Sydney offers a unique and fulfilling living experience. For those who value a dynamic lifestyle in a cosmopolitan setting, Sydney stands out as a premier destination.

References:

10 Awesome Reasons to Live in Sydney | Insider Guides, Retrieved 24 May 2024, from

<https://insiderguides.com.au/reasons-study-in-sydney/>

'People tend to overlook it': The best value suburb within 10km of Sydney's CBD | Sydney Morning Herald, Retrieved 24 May 2024, from

<https://www.smh.com.au/property/news/people-tend-to-overlook-it-the-best-value-suburb-within-10km-of-sydney-s-cbd-20230315-p5cs9z.html>

End Of Lease Cleaning Blacktown | Reader's Digest, Retrieved 24 May 2024, from

<https://www.bondcleaning.sydney/end-of-lease-cleaning-blacktown/>

Living costs | Sydney Education, Retrieved 24 May 2024, from

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/study/fees-and-loans/other-costs/living-costs.html>

Accommodation tips: How to find the right house and housemates for you | Study Australia,
Retrieved 24 May 2024, from

<https://www.studyaustralia.gov.au/en/tools-and-resources/tips-and-advice-for-students/accommodation-tips-find-the-right-house-and-housemates>