

OSP Recruitment

Living and working in Australia



The country in brief

Australia is a vast country with lifestyle choices to suit all tastes. It is a diverse, modern, and cosmopolitan nation. Most of the population choose to live along the extensive coastlines – and with Australia boasting over 7,000 beaches you can see why.

From the prehistoric gorges of Kakadu National Park, to the white sails of the Sydney Opera House, Australia is a country as big as your imagination.

Kick back on a beach in Western Australia; lose yourself in the labyrinthine laneways of culture-rich Melbourne or be humbled by red desert sunsets over Uluru. Or take on Sydney, a heady mix of surf and sun, and you'll soon realise Australia is a place to be discovered. Australia is an independent Western democracy with a population of more than 26 million people. It is one of the world's most urbanised countries, with about 70 per cent of the population living in the 10 largest cities. Most of the population is concentrated along the eastern seaboard and the south-eastern corner of the continent.

Australia's lifestyle reflects its mainly Western origins, but Australia is also a rich multicultural society, which has been enriched by over seven 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.

For nature lovers, Australia offers vast areas of national parks, filled with uniquely Australian native flora and fauna. And, with an average population density of only 3.3 people per square kilometre, it's very easy to find a quiet spot when you want to escape the city life.



Regional Australia

Outside of the state capitals, Australia has many well connected regional cities and towns that offer exceptional quality of life. Whether you are looking for a sea change or a tree change, house prices and rents in regional cities are often over 50% below the metro equivalent. For people looking for balance, ease of travel to and from work, excellent schools, and extracurricular activities, regional Australia has it all.

States and territories

Australia is made up of six states:

- New South Wales
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia

and two territories:

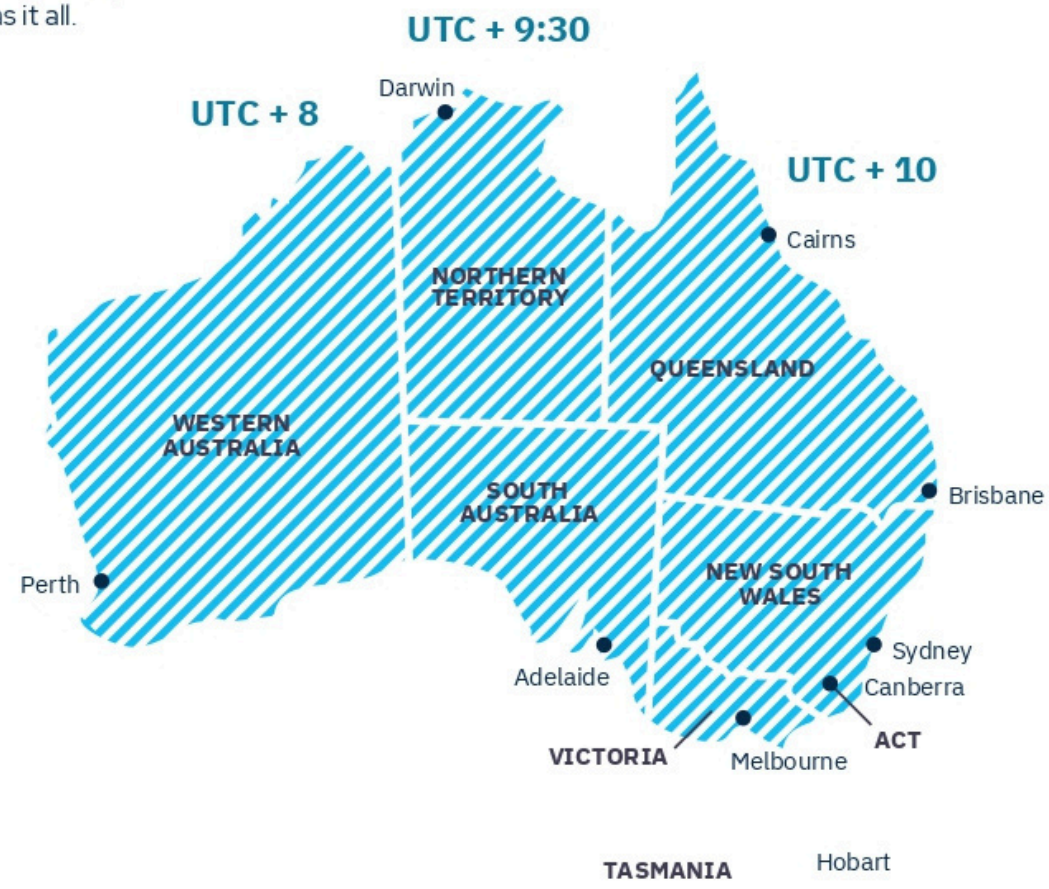
- Australian Capital Territory
- Northern Territory

Government

Each state and territory has its own government, which manages local policy. The Australian federal government is responsible for nationwide laws and policy.

Time zones

With a land mass close to 7.7 million square kilometres, Australia is the world's sixth largest country and is divided into three separate time zones.



Aussie slang terms you need to know:

G'Day = Hello

She'll be right = It will be OK

Arvo = Afternoon

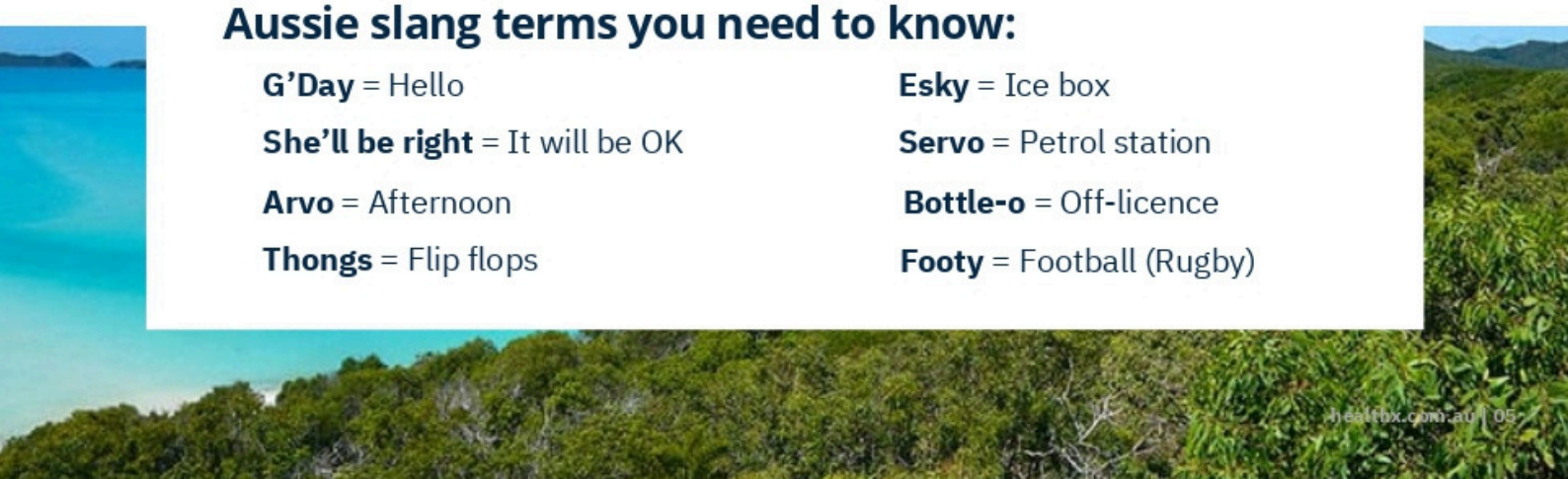
Thongs = Flip flops

Esky = Ice box

Servo = Petrol station

Bottle-o = Off-licence

Footy = Football (Rugby)





Aboriginal history

Australia's Aboriginal people have the oldest continuous culture on Earth and are believed to have arrived from Indonesia by boat more than 50,000 years ago.

At the time of European settlement there were up to one million Aboriginal people living in Australia as hunters and gatherers, scattered across 500 different clans. Each clan had a strong spiritual connection with their land (which continues today), but travelled widely to find water, trade seasonal produce and form ritual gatherings. All Aboriginal people share the belief in the Dreaming ('Tjukurrpa') where ancestor spirits continue to link the past, the present, the people and the land.

These stories are regaled in the culture through song, dance, painting and tales. The colonisation of Australia had a devastating impact on the Aboriginal people through dispossession of their land, illness and death from introduced diseases, as well as a huge disruption to their traditional lifestyle. However, recognition of this impact has more recently seen the return of large tracts of land, positive changes to past policies and the resurgence of efforts to safeguard and foster the culture.

Australia's Great Barrier Reef is the largest living thing on Earth and is visible from outer space.

Outstanding natural beauty

Australia houses a huge variety of animals shaped by the unique climate and geology of the continent. More than 80% of the plants, mammals, reptiles and amphibians are not found anywhere else in the world. Some of the best-known animals include the kangaroo, koala, echidna, dingo, platypus, wallaby, wombat, Tasmanian devil and bandicoot. Unique in design, lifestyle and behaviours, the kangaroo and wallaby in particular are commonly spotted roaming across rural Australia.

The birdlife is just as varied and the sounds and sights in the skies are evident from the moment you enter the country. The first to be heard are the rowdy cockatoos, followed by the hackle of the ravens and the giggle of the kookaburras. Many homes experience a regular balcony visit from the brilliant rainbow lorikeets, while city commuters share pavement space with the white ibis which is often nicknamed the Dumpster Diver or Bin Chicken.

Of course, the country is also widely recognised for its dangerous animals, with sharks, spiders, snakes and crocodiles getting the majority of the bad press. However, the fearsome reputation is unfounded and on average there are only 5 deaths a year relating to these creatures, while 20 people die a year from horse riding accidents, and 10 from bee stings.





Health and living

The Australian population has a fantastic overall health record, with life expectancy at birth set at almost 84 years of age; the 8th highest in the world.

Healthcare

Healthcare in Australia is provided by both private and government institutions. The current system, known as Medicare, was introduced in Australia in 1984. Citizens of the Commonwealth are able to access the Medicare system due to a reciprocal agreement between the countries.

For more information visit: **servicesaustralia.gov.au/medicare** You might want to consider a private healthcare scheme, which can often be a requirement for some visas.

Registering with a GP

You will first need to register for a Medicare card, and with the number you receive and your home address you will be able to register with a local GP.

There are three types of practice – bulk billing, mixed billing and private billing. Bulk billing practices are subsidised by Medicare, therefore the cost to you is greatly reduced if you do not have private health insurance.

Childcare

If your children are younger than school age there are many fulltime and part-time childcare services available, with additional options for after school care and school holiday care. The Government website that also provides a hotline to assist with choosing childcare that suits your needs is: **mychild.gov.au/sites/mychild**

Other key websites include:

- **goodstart.org.au**
- **playgroupaustralia.org.au**

Education

Education in Australia is primarily the responsibility of states and territories. Each state or territory government provides the funding and regulates the public and private schools within its governing area. The federal government funds the universities, but these set their own curriculum. Education follows the three-tier model, which includes primary education (primary schools), followed by secondary education (secondary / high schools) and tertiary education (universities and colleges).

Finding accommodation

Renting property in Australia, before making a purchase, is typically the choice that works best for new migrants wanting to try out different areas and suburbs.

However competition for rental properties is fierce, driving a surge in prices, so be wary that over 30 percent of monthly income might need to go into financing your home.

Due to the intense competition, it pays to be well prepared. Typical applications require:

- **Proof of identity** - passport / driver's license
- **Proof of income** - bank statements for the last 3 months
- **References** - this will include the applicant's current employer and possibly a previous landlord

Be aware that in most cases you will be required to pay the first instalment of rent upfront and will also need to pay a bond, which will be an additional one month to six weeks' rent.

Some of the main websites for finding homes within Australia are:

- **rent.com.au**
- **airbnb.com.au**
- **domain.com.au**
- **property.com.au**
- **realestate.com.au**
- **gumtree.com.au**

Cost of accommodation

Rental costs vary considerably depending on the region, city and neighbourhood.

Rents are lower in rural locations than urban areas and, as a general rule, the further a property is from a large city or town, public transport or other facilities, the cheaper it is. Average rents tend to be highest in Sydney, Melbourne and Darwin.

Approximate weekly rents for unfurnished properties in larger cities are:

- **1-bed apartment:** $500-$800 per week
- **2-bed apartment:** $800-$1100 per week
- **3-bed apartment:** $900-$1,400 per week

Cost of living

In recent years Australia has become known as a destination with a high cost of living, and while this is generally true (certainly in the metropolitan centres), migrants accept that the proportionally higher salary brackets and the higher quality of life makes up for it. As a result, Australia is still thought of as one of the world's most 'liveable' countries.

Places of worship

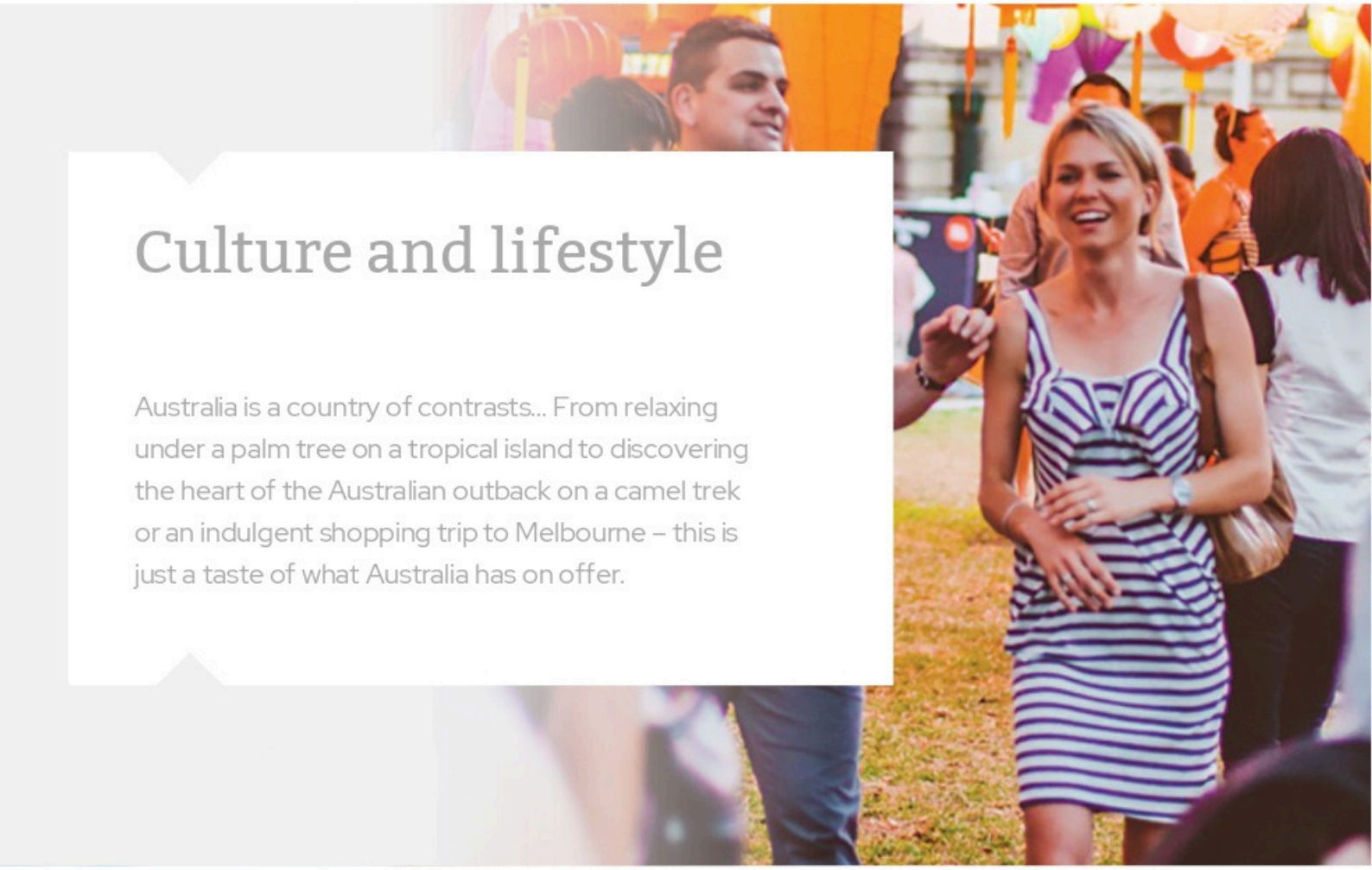
As a truly multicultural society, Australian cities and towns have an excellent selection of places of worship. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism are all well represented and form an important part of the community spirit.



Rents vary greatly between cities and regional areas and can range from $500 to over $1000 per week

Australia is a very multicultural country, with over 31% of residents being born overseas, as of 2023

Australia is in the top 10 countries for household income in the world



Culture and lifestyle

Australia is a country of contrasts... From relaxing under a palm tree on a tropical island to discovering the heart of the Australian outback on a camel trek or an indulgent shopping trip to Melbourne – this is just a taste of what Australia has on offer.

Dining, tipping & service

Australia is one of the most exciting destinations for 'foodies' in the world because of its culinary innovation and its healthy and fresh approach to food preparation. Australian cuisine owes its reputation to its fresh and high-quality produce, rigorous training and pride in the service and hospitality industry, the influence of Asia's diverse cuisines and the multitude of ethnic groups represented in the country.

The multicultural population has provided a huge choice of affordable restaurants specialising in a variety of international cuisines. Traditional Australian 'bush tucker' is also being used to great effect in the cities' best restaurants - chilli kangaroo tail, sweet yam gnocchi and lemon myrtle linguine to name a few. Menus also incorporate Indigenous Australian wild foods such as bunya nuts and Kakadu plums with specialty meats such as crocodile and Northern Territory buffalo.

The Australian wine sector is recognised internationally as producing a full range of wine styles and varieties to match any dish, from full- bodied reds and deep fruity whites, to sparkling, dessert and fortified wines. Australian wines are sold in more than 100 countries and found in the finest restaurants the world over. Famous wine regions include the Barossa Valley, the Hunter Valley, Margaret River and the Adelaide Hills, with plenty more to choose from and explore.



Entertainment

Australia is a country of cosmopolitan cities with theatres, museums, sports fields and galleries; where people can meet to enjoy sporting events and artistic shows. It is a land of people who have come together from all over the world and brought their music, dance, art and other fun parts of their cultures with them. There is no shortage of lively music scenes hosting local and international acts. Pubs, hotels, cinemas and arts venues, with a range of entertainment to suit all tastes and activities, provide a healthy balance between work and play.

Climate

With a climate ranging from tropical to temperate, there is sure to be an ideal location for you, whether that involves surfing at one of Australia's many beautiful beaches or snowboarding down a ski slope! Summer is the rainy season in our tropical regions to the north, which brings our lush rainforests to life. Spring and autumn are mild and are the best seasons for bush walks and discovering nature.

The Australian winter from June to August is generally mild, but offers snow on the snow fields in the southern mountain regions.

The Australian sun can be quite strong, so it's best to wear a shirt and put on a hat while enjoying the great outdoors. Sunscreen containing SPF50+ coverage is recommended.

The Bureau of Meteorology is Australia's national weather, climate and water agency: **bom.gov.au**

CITY	AV. SUMMER HIGH (°C)	AV. WINTER LOW (°C)	CLICHÉ	TRUE OR FALSE
ADELAIDE	31	7	Unrelenting, dry heat	**True** - but similar to a Mediterranean climate
BRISBANE	30	10	Humid and tropical	**True in summer** - winters are warm and dry
CANBERRA	28	1	Cold, cold, cold	**True in winter and at night** - Less true by day
DARWIN	32	23	Hot, humid, cyclonic	**Mostly true**
HOBART	17	9	Always cold and wet	**Half true** - often cold, but very dry
MELBOURNE	26	6	Four seasons in one day	**True**
PERTH	30	9	Always sunny and dry	**Both** - it's sunny, but it's also wet
SYDNEY	26	8	Perfect beach days every day	**False** - but very often true, even in winter



Australia has the world's second-largest population of surfers

Travel and transport

Visas and migration

All applications for migration to Australia are assessed against requirements for different categories of visas. Migrants are selected on factors such as a relationship to an Australian permanent resident or citizen, skills, age, qualifications, capital and / or business acumen. All applicants must also meet the health and character requirements specified by the legislation.

If you're interested in a working holiday visa, visit : **immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/work-holiday-417**

Getting here

Many airlines fly to Australia from around the world. These include:

- **Qantas**
- **Virgin Australia**
- **British Airways**
- **Emirates**
- **Etihad**
- **Qatar Airlines**
- **Singapore Airlines**

Driving in Australia

Due to the size of the country, it's most convenient to have an internal flight. There are domestic flights throughout Australia and they are very reasonably priced when booked early. The most commonly used airlines are Qantas, Virgin Australia and Jet Star.

Trains or trams are used in most of the major cities with some intercity routes. Metro and interstate buses are also available throughout the country. Australians drive on the **left-hand side** of the road with the speed and distance measured in kilometres.

Driving Licence

You can use an international driving license in Australia, however you'll have to apply for an Australian licence if you intend to stay for a long period of time. This can be arranged with the RTA (Road Traffic Authority).

Our client in Australia has an in-house migration services. They will review your eligibility status and guide you through the visa applicaiton process



Finance and banking

Australia is home to around 97 banks, including foreign-owned subsidiary banks and regional banks, close to 36 credit unions and societies, and more than 600 non-bank lenders.



Money

In 1966 Australia adopted a dollars and cents system of decimal currency, and in the mid-1980s introduced both $1 and $2 coins.

Applying for a bank account

You can open a bank account in Australia from your home country up to 12 months before you depart. If you open a bank account within 6 weeks of arrival, you will only need your passport for identification. If you open a bank account after 6 weeks from arrival, you will need additional identification such as a birth certificate, driver's license, credit card and/or bank card.

Banking services

When using a cash machine in Australia it is free to use your own bank ATM, however you are charged for using another bank cash machine.

Opening hours are generally 9.00am – 4.00pm Monday to Friday, with some banks also opening on Saturday mornings.

Tax and tax file numbers

To calculate the tax you will pay please visit: **ato.gov.au/calculators-and-tools/simple-tax-calculator**

Australia has a national identity number system for tax purposes. This is called a Tax File Number, or TFN.

Find out more information about applying for a TFN here: **ato.gov.au/individuals/tax-file-number**

Superannuation

Australia has superannuation ('super') arrangements in place to enable the accumulation of funds for retirement. It is compulsory for employers to make super contributions for their employees at a minimum of 10.5% on top of employees' wages and salaries.

Pension transfers

Under Australian tax law, amounts you transfer from a foreign retirement fund may be subject to tax, and you may also be subject to other obligations in the foreign country. Depending on the rules of the foreign fund, you may be able to transfer an amount to a complying Australian super fund or yourself. If you transfer the amount to a complying fund, the amount will generally count towards either or both of your contributions caps, and you may have to pay excess contributions tax.

Please seek initial guidance at: **ato.gov.au/individuals-and-families/super-for-individuals-and-families/super/foreign-super-funds/transfer-from-a-foreign-super-fund-to-an-australian-super-fund**



Good to know

The Australian government has also released a 'Life in Australia' document which provides an overview of Australia, its history, way of life and Australian values.

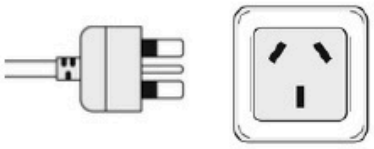
It can be found here:
immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/support-subsite/files/life-in-australia/life-in-australia.pdf

Public Holidays

Australia has between 10 and 12 public holidays per year, depending on the state.

Utilities

Electricity in Australia is 220-240V AC 50Hz. The sockets are 3-pin and depending on which appliances you intend to relocate with you, you will need appropriate adaptors. Universal outlets for 240V or 100V shavers are found in most hotels.



Gas is common in homes in Australia, and both electricity and gas are typically supplied by the same energy provider into the home making account management easier.

Water costs vary by State and are dependent on the type of property you occupy, and whether you rent or own. Typical water rates average out at approximately $470 per house per annum.

Mobile phones

Mobile providers include Vodafone, Virgin, Telstra and Optus in Australia. It's worthwhile checking their coverage to be sure it suits your lifestyle and travel.

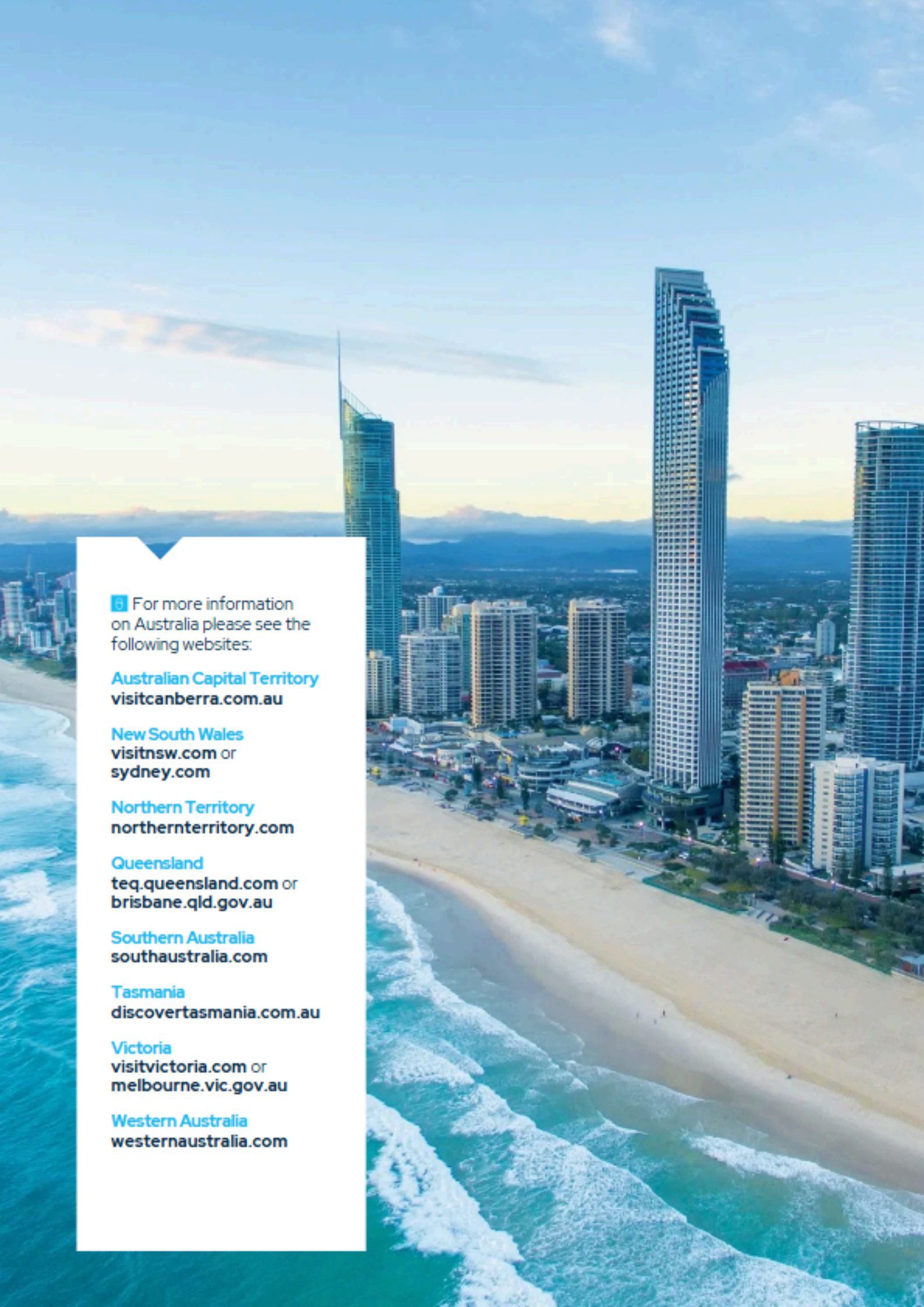
Internet

Fibre broadband is the most commonly available internet connection through the Government owned National Broadband Network (NBN), which is in rollout across 93% of the nation delivering speeds of up to one gigabyte per second.

Phone and internet plan options include pre-paid, fixed contract and bundling options with a combined average cost of between $80 – $150 per month based on call and data usage.

Emergency numbers

The national telephone number for all emergency services in Australia including AMBULANCE, FIRE, and POLICE is "**000**". A great source of information is the 'Beginning a Life in Australia' booklets which welcome newly-arrived travellers to Australia. Information is provided on the types of settlement services available and advice on where to go to for assistance. This information is available in English and is translated into 24 community languages for each state and territory.



For more information on Australia please see the following websites:

Australian Capital Territory
visitcanberra.com.au

New South Wales
visitnsw.com or
sydney.com

Northern Territory
northernterritory.com

Queensland
teq.queensland.com or
brisbane.qld.gov.au

Southern Australia
southaustralia.com

Tasmania
discovertasmania.com.au

Victoria
visitvictoria.com or
melbourne.vic.gov.au

Western Australia
westernaustralia.com