



## OUTCAN Guide | Life in Australia

### LOCATION

- **Country:** Australia
- **Towns:** Adelaide, Brisbane, Cabarlah, Canungra, Canberra, Perth and Sydney
- **Base:** Embassy posting, Exchange posting and Staff College posting
- **Mission Acronym:** SYDNY for Embassy postings

### POPULATION: Approximately 25.9 million

- **Ethnicity:** Diverse, with significant populations of British, Chinese, Indian, and other ethnicities.

### LANGUAGE:

- The official language is English. French and other languages are spoken by some expatriate communities.

### OTHER INFO TO CONSIDER:

- **Visa:** Canadians need a visa for any stay. Various visa options are available depending on the purpose of stay, such as tourist, student, or work visas.
- **Family Visits:** Family members can visit under the same visa requirements as the primary applicant, depending on the visa type.
- **Tourist Visa:** Canadians can stay for up to 3 months in Australia.
- **VPNs:** Its ok to use VPNs or VoIP/messaging apps

### COST OF LIVING

- **Currency:** Australian Dollar (AUD)
- **Exchange Rate:** 1 CAD = 1.11 AUD (July 2024)

### QUALITY OF LIFE

**Climate:** Varies significantly by region.

- Northern Australia: Tropical, with wet and dry seasons.
- Southern Australia: Temperate, with mild winters and warm summers.
- Central Australia: Arid and semi-arid, with hot summers and cold winters.
- **Natural Disasters:** Bushfires, floods, cyclones, and severe storms can occur. Residents should be aware of local emergency procedures.

### Laws and culture:

- **Drug Laws:** Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs are severe. Convicted offenders can expect lengthy jail sentences.
- **Alcohol:** The legal drinking age is 18. Public intoxication laws are enforced.
- **Driving:** Strict laws against drinking and driving. The legal blood alcohol limit is 0.05%. Convicted offenders can expect heavy fines and jail sentences. Driving is on the left-hand side of the road. Both single-lane and double-lane roundabouts are more common compared to Canada.

- **Cultural Influence:** Australia is a multicultural society with influences from various cultures, predominantly Western. Indigenous Australian culture also has a significant presence.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

- **Driving:** You must carry a valid driver's license. An international driving permit is recommended.
- **Crime:** Overall low risk, but like any country, opportunistic crimes like theft and pickpocketing can occur.

## HOUSING

- **Support:** Embassy postings, families are allocated a place based on the local housing committee's recommendation.
- **Availability:** Diverse housing options, from apartments to standalone homes, are available depending on budget and preference for those not on Embassy postings.
- **Note:** Ovens are smaller usually only the smallest size baking pans from Canada will fit in Australian ovens (no more than 35-37cm in length). There are fewer electrical outlets per room in Australia homes compared to Ottawa. No basements and little storage. Houses are not insulated like Canadian homes so colder in the winter.

## EMPLOYMENT

- **Spousal Employment:** Opportunities are available but depend on the spouse's visa status and qualifications. Employment in the economy may be subject to local regulations and taxes.
  - **Note:** Most of the positions at the mission are administrative in nature and some require a security clearance. Spouses are encouraged to obtain a Secret security clearance, or ensure existing clearances are current, before departure from Canada. [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/criminal-record-checks](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/criminal-record-checks)
- **Op Tempo:** Varies depending on the position. Travel may be required.

## HEALTH CARE

- **Access:** High-quality medical care is available. While OUTCAN, families of Canadian Armed Forces members are enrolled in comprehensive medical coverage through the [Public Service Health Care Plan](#), which is administered by [MSH International](#). Families are covered for dental care through the [Public Service Dental Care Plan](#) by [Canada Life](#). Look for places that direct bill to your insurance where possible.
- **Language:** English services are standard. French-speaking doctors may be available in specific areas.
- **Special Needs:** Services are available but may require consultation to ensure appropriate resources.
- **Pregnancy and Birth:** Comprehensive care is available in both the public and private sectors.

## SCHOOLING

- **Schools:** Multiple international schools are available in major cities, such as Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Perth. School begins on February 1<sup>st</sup> and ends December 15<sup>th</sup>. Three 2-week holidays in April, July, and October. Registration Online with the ACT

- **Curriculum:** Varies by school; international schools often follow IB or British/American curricula.
- **Special Needs:** Services are available, but consultation is advised to ensure proper resources.
- Consult with [CEM](#) and schools prior to any commitments.

### CHILDCARE

- **Availability:** High-quality childcare services are available, including daycare and preschool programs.

### TRANSPORTATION

- **Airports:** Major international airports in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, and other cities.
- **Public Transport:** Comprehensive public transportation systems including buses, trains, trams, and ferries in major cities.
- **Driving:** International driving permits are recommended. Local transport is reliable and extensive.

### RESOURCES AND AMENITIES

- **Military Family Services:** No specific center, but remote support is available through Global MFS team: [globalmfs-sfmmondiaux@cfmws.com](mailto:globalmfs-sfmmondiaux@cfmws.com)
- **Mental Health Resources:** Comprehensive mental health services are available through the public and private sectors.
  - Family Information Line: [FIL-LIF@cfmws.com](mailto:FIL-LIF@cfmws.com)
  - [CFMWS | Mental Health | CFMWS](#)
  - For additional resources or questions please reach out to your Global MFS Team: [globalmfs-sfmmondiaux@cfmws.com](mailto:globalmfs-sfmmondiaux@cfmws.com)
- **Internet:** High-quality internet services are widely available.

### ACTIVITIES

- **Leisure:** Plenty of recreational activities available, including sports, outdoor activities, and cultural events.
- **Playgrounds:** Numerous playgrounds and parks, adhere to high safety standards.

### RESTRICTIONS TO CONSIDER

- **Common Law Relationships:** Recognized and supported.
- **Same-Sex Couples:** Fully recognized and supported, including marriage.
- **Medications:** Prescription medications are regulated. Cannabis is legal for medicinal use with a prescription. Recreational use remains illegal.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Canadian Travel Advisories  
<https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/australia>
- CIA World Factbooks (One Pager from the US)  
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/australia>
- Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)  
<https://www.gov.uk/world/living-in-australia>

### FOR MORE COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT TO THE RESOURCES BELOW

- Global MFS Team: [globalmfs-sfmmondiaux@cfmws.com](mailto:globalmfs-sfmmondiaux@cfmws.com)