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New South Wales Government
Australia

SYDNEY & NEW SOUTH WALES

Living in New South Wales



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WELCOME

People in New South Wales (NSW) enjoy a very high quality of life. Sydney was rated 10th out of 221 cities in the Worldwide Quality of Living Survey compiled by Mercer Human Resource Consulting in 2010.

The lifestyle of NSW is similar to those of the United Kingdom, Europe and North America, which eases the transition for migrants who choose to relocate here. Australia and the United Kingdom share similar legal systems, education systems and business cultures. The Australian approach to working, socialising and entertaining is also similar. These factors are a major attraction for many international people who choose Sydney and NSW as a long-term base and they also help to develop strong business relationships.

Sydney's cultural diversity has produced a society that is creative, open and friendly. Sydney offers a secure environment for families, with excellent infrastructure in health care, education, transport and telecommunications.

Regional NSW also offers many lifestyle advantages for business people and their families, including a relaxed way of life and friendly communities.

The growing population of large inland centres like Wagga Wagga, Albury, Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo and Tamworth and coastal cities such as Newcastle, Wollongong and Coffs Harbour has produced bustling centres that boast all the cosmopolitan influences, sporting, entertainment and leisure activities of any growing city.

To help you make an informed decision about emigrating, this booklet provides information on visas, taxation, cost of living, residential real estate, transportation, education and training, healthcare, leisure and entertainment and living in regional NSW. More information on many of these subjects is available at www.nsw.gov.au

VISAS

The NSW Government has a clear, easy-to-use website, www.business.nsw.gov.au/live-and-work-in-nsw, with immigration information for:

- business owners, investors and senior executives who want to enter NSW to start a business
- skilled migrants looking to work in NSW
- skilled migrants looking for opportunities in regional NSW.

Other websites of interest to potential migrants are:

- www.immi.gov.au – Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
- www.business.nsw.gov.au – NSW Trade and Investment has information for establishing or buying an existing business in NSW.

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP

In general, to apply for citizenship you will need to:

- have been living in Australia on a valid Australian visa for four years immediately before applying which must include the past 12 months as a permanent resident
- not have been absent from Australia for more than one year in total in the four year period, including no more than 90 days in the year before applying, and
- be of good character if you are 18 years of age or over.

For further information visit the citizenship website: www.citizenship.gov.au. This site also includes information on dual citizenship.

SALARIES

WHAT YOU WILL EARN

Salaries vary widely by industry, location and skills and experience. For up-to-date information on what you might expect to earn in NSW go to the websites of these NSW recruitment firms that publish salary survey information:

- www.hays.com.au/salary
- www.acpeople.com.au/salary
- www.michaelpage.com.au/salary-centre.html
- jobs.au.hudson.com/node.asp?kwd=salary-guides.





TAXATION

WHAT YOU WILL PAY IN AUSTRALIA

Tax is a specialised area and needs to be worked out on an individual basis. Income tax can be structured in various ways for employees in Australia. Individuals, partnerships and companies have to submit a tax return at the end of each financial year, which falls on 30 June. It is advisable to use the services of an accountant to do this.

If you start your employment as a salaried worker, visit an accountant to find the best tax set-up for you. There are two kinds of qualified accountant in Australia: the certified practicing accountant, or CPA, and the chartered accountant. Make sure your accountant has one of these qualifications.

For basic information on tax rates, fringe benefits tax, which affects employment benefits like company cars and business expenses, superannuation and family tax benefits visit the Australian Tax Office (ATO) website: www.ato.gov.au.

If you will be paid a salary you can work out your weekly, fortnightly or monthly income tax deductions in the tax calculation section of the ATO website. The amount of income tax you pay also depends on your visa status. Once you are registered as an Australian resident, the following table for 2011–12 is a guide to the income tax that will apply.

ANNUAL EARNINGS	TAX RATE (%)	ANNUAL AMOUNT
A\$0 – \$6000	0	Nil
\$6,001 – \$37,000	15	15c for each \$1 over \$6,000
\$37,001 – \$80,000	30	\$4,650 plus 30c for each \$1 over \$37,000
\$80,001 – \$180,000	37	\$17,550 plus 37c for each \$1 over \$80,000
Over \$180,001	45	\$54,550 plus 45c for each \$1 over \$180,000

In addition, there is the Medicare levy of 1.5% of taxable income.

HIGH-QUALITY, LOW-COST LIVING

Australia's cost of living is low compared to many other countries. On a purchasing power parity basis (adjusting for differences in price levels), Australia's GDP per capita is higher than that of Japan, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom and Singapore.

Use www.ozforex.com.au or www.yourmortgage.com.au/calculators to get an idea of the cost of everyday living in your country's currency.

NSW has a sophisticated, modern economy and the cost of living in the State is highly competitive when compared with other areas in the Asia Pacific.

GROCERIES

Australia is famous for its high-quality, well-priced food products and its abundance of fresh local produce, including meat, fish and vegetables. Grocery websites will give you an idea of the cost of your weekly food purchases.

- Woolworths is one of the largest nationwide food retailers. Browse their food products and prices here: www.woolworths.com.au
- Coles www.coles.com.au is another major supermarket chain with stores across the country.
- Shopfast www.shopfast.com.au is a major online food ordering service.
- Green Grocer www.greengrocer.net.au delivers fresh fruit, vegetables and dairy produce to your door if you live in Sydney.

DEPARTMENT STORES

To get an idea of the cost of items such as towels, sheets, kitchenware, toiletries and clothing visit the websites of the following department stores:

- David Jones www.davidjones.com.au
- Myer www.myer.com.au.

PETROL (GASOLINE)

The Australian Automobile Association compiles figures on petrol prices and updates them regularly www.aaa.asn.au.

CARS

For information on new and second-hand car prices and to see the range of manufacturers who sell in the Australian market look at www.drive.com.au. For additional information on the cost of motoring in NSW, visit www.nrma.com.au.



REAL ESTATE

FINDING A HOME

Buying or renting a house or apartment in Sydney is more affordable than in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Mumbai and Beijing. Prices are comparable with Singapore, Jakarta and Seoul.

LOOKING FOR A HOUSE OR APARTMENT

If you can't visit NSW to find an ideal place to live, it is worth getting a guide book to find out more about the area where you will live and work. A handy online guide is www.travelaustralia.com.au where you can explore the State, region by region.

Searching for a house or apartment in NSW from overseas is a relatively simple task with the rise of residential real estate websites. Most real estate sites ask for a suburb's postcode when you are searching online for a property. If you know the name of a town or suburb but don't know the postcode try Telstra's White Pages postcode search tool www.whitepages.com.au. Some useful sites are:

- www.realestate.com.au allows you to key in a suburb and search for a house in the price range you can afford
- www.domain.com.au provides comprehensive listings of rental properties and houses and apartments for sale across NSW
- www.homepriceguide.com.au gives the average prices for suburbs and towns. The site also gives a breakdown of a suburb's population, public transport, demographics and more.

Real estate prices in Sydney and NSW vary dramatically. Properties located in and around Sydney typically cost far more than those in country areas. Houses in Sydney's top waterside suburbs, such as Mosman and Vaucluse, often fetch up to 10 times more than their counterparts in the outer suburbs. An indication of the cost of buying a property is given by the median sales prices – strata i.e. flat/unit or townhouse (December qtr, 2010):

Sydney	\$624,000
Inner ring	\$643,000
Middle ring	\$488,000
Outer ring	\$396,000
NSW	\$484,000

The median sales prices – non-strata i.e. separate house (March 2010):

Sydney	\$944,000
Inner ring	\$1.298 million
Middle ring	\$869,000
Outer ring	\$540,000
NSW	\$563,000

For a comprehensive listing of median and average residential property prices and rental costs by Sydney suburb and for the rest of NSW, refer to the NSW Department of Housing's Quarterly Rent and Sales Reports at www.housing.nsw.gov.au.

Growth in residential real estate values can be substantial. The NSW Government Land and Property Information site www.lpma.nsw.gov.au shows growth in land values across Sydney. Average land values in Sydney increased 4% a year between 2005 and 2010.

For more details on rental and purchase costs visit the Colliers Jardine website www.colliersjardine.com.au.

If you want to convert the cost of an Australian house into your country's currency use an online currency converter such as www.ozforex.com.au.

BUYING A HOME

Houses and apartments are sold in two ways in NSW: by private treaty, where you negotiate with an agent or owner to buy a property that is for sale, or, more commonly in Sydney, by public auction. It is reasonably common to buy a block of land and build a house, although blocks are becoming increasingly scarce in the suburbs in and around Sydney.

The processes of searching for and purchasing a property are well explained in the Buying a House section of www.realestate.com.au. This site also has a section that spells out all the extra costs you will incur when you purchase a property in Australia, such as government taxes, disbursements and costs of pest and building inspections.

You can search for a lawyer or conveyancer specialising in organising property purchases at www.lawsociety.com.au/community/findingalawyer/findalawyersearch/.

To find a real estate agent before arriving in Australia, go to the Real Estate Institute of NSW (REI) website www.reinsw.com.au. Agents listed on this site are REI members who have passed strict criteria to gain membership.

If you are not a permanent resident, you may need approval from the Foreign Investment Review Board before buying residential property. See www.firb.gov.au.

HOME LOANS

If you need to arrange a home loan there are numerous sites that help you work out how much you can borrow, that summarise different lenders' fees and services and, in some cases, allow you to apply for a loan online. Sites include: www.yourmortgage.com.au, www.mortgagechoice.com.au and www.fpa.asn.au.

Loans are usually paid over 25 to 30 years, although most mortgages make provisions for early repayment. Payments are usually made monthly or fortnightly. Currently, home loan floating interest rates are about 6.8 to 7.7%. Fixed rate loans are also available.

Approval for home loans depends on how much money you have for the deposit – lenders ask you to have between 5 and 20% of the value of the property, depending on the type of loan. Lenders also need to see proof of your income and your partner’s income.

There are two basic types of loan: owner occupier loans where you buy a property and live in it, paying off your mortgage and using your home as security for the loan; and investment loans.

There are various types of investment loan – you can choose fixed or floating rate loans or have a combination of fixed and floating rate loans. To find out more about investing in property in NSW visit www.moneymanager.com.au.

The following are also sometimes necessary to secure a home loan:

- home building insurance
- income protection insurance
- mortgage insurance.

RENTING A HOME

Renting a house or apartment is relatively simple. Rental properties are listed on many of the real estate websites mentioned above under Buying a home. The median rents (\$/week) (March qtr, 2011) for a two bedroom flat/unit were:

Sydney	\$750
Inner ring	\$650
Middle ring	\$490
Outer ring	\$430
NSW	\$500

The median rent (\$/week) (March qtr, 2010) for a three bedroom separate house were:

Sydney	\$810
Inner ring	\$900
Middle ring	\$600
Outer ring	\$430
NSW	\$410

Real estate agents usually ask for a rental bond as a form of security. The maximum rental bond is either:

- four weeks rent, for unfurnished premises
- six weeks rent, for fully furnished premises with a rent of \$250 or less per week
- unlimited, if the rent for fully furnished premises is more than \$250 per week.

The bond is lodged with the Department of Fair Trading Rental Bond Board. For a guide to renting in NSW, available in many different languages, see the Department of Fair Trading website www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au.

TRANSPORT

GETTING AROUND NSW

ROADS

Getting around NSW by road is easy – there are excellent freeways between major centres, and scenic routes are often sign-posted to encourage picturesque detours.

CARS

Car prices are competitive in Australia with a good range of local and imported cars to choose from. To drive a car legally on NSW roads you must register the car. To do this you must have:

- proof of your identity
- proof of acquisition – or proof of how you bought the car
- a current compulsory third party or green slip – the most basic form of car insurance and one you need to drive legally
- an inspection report or pink slip which verifies your car is in good enough condition to be safe on the roads.

Registration for most domestic cars costs between \$238 – 447 a year. For more information visit the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority website www.rta.nsw.gov.au.

DRIVER'S LICENCE

If you are a permanent resident and you plan to stay in NSW you may drive in NSW on your country of origin's licence for three months. When the three months has passed, you must sit for your NSW Driver's Licence. This involves passing an eye test, a written test and, in most cases, taking a driving test. You also have to prove your identity and that you live in NSW.

Licences are valid for one, three or five years and cost \$50, \$118 and \$157, respectively (prices are subject to change). To find out more, visit licensing guidelines for overseas drivers at www.rta.nsw.gov.au.

General information on driving in NSW is available from the NRMA website www.mynrma.com.au.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT – A COMPREHENSIVE NETWORK

The east coast of NSW is the most populated area in the State and most of the public transport network, including trains, buses and ferries, links cities and suburbs along the coastline. Maps of the rail network, with traveling times on the routes, are available at the Countrylink website www.countrylink.nsw.gov.au.

Sydney's public transport system is comprehensive: you can travel by bus, train, monorail and light rail around Sydney's centre – and by ferry across Sydney Harbour.

CityRail trains run to Newcastle in the north, to the Blue Mountains through Parramatta in the west, through Campbelltown to Goulburn in the south west and to Wollongong in the south. Visit the CityRail website www.cityrail.info for more information.

For maps of where ferries and buses travel in the city visit the NSW Transport websites www.sydneyferries.info and www.sydneybuses.info.

CYCLING

Cycling for commuting, recreation and competition is on the rise throughout Australia.

In NSW, the Roads and Traffic Authority has launched the Bicycle Information NSW website www.bicycleinfo.nsw.gov.au to promote the benefits of cycling, such as improved individual health and fitness.

Other resources:

- www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/AboutSydney/ParkingAndTransport/Cycling/
- bikesydney.org
- www.ridethecity.com.

FLIGHTS AROUND AUSTRALIA

Major airports are located in Australia's main cities: Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Hobart, Brisbane, Darwin, Adelaide and Perth. The main airport in Sydney, Kingsford-Smith Airport, is located at Mascot, eight kilometres south of the city centre www.sydneyairport.com.au.

Flights between these centres are readily available and serviced by Qantas www.qantas.com.au, Jetstar www.jetstar.com.au and Virgin Blue www.virginblue.com.au. Smaller airlines fly to country destinations around NSW.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

A STRONG ACADEMIC TRADITION

Schools in NSW have an international reputation for high quality curriculum and innovative teaching. Our world-class universities combine quality teaching, groundbreaking research and career-oriented training.

The Australian school year runs from January to December, with four school terms in NSW. The following dates are for 2012:

Term 1	January 27 – April 5
Term 2	April 23 – June 29
Term 3	July 16 – September 21
Term 4	October 8 – December 21

The longest holiday is over the Christmas period (the Australian summer). Most educational institutions close for at least six weeks at that time.

The NSW public holidays for 2012 are:

DATE	OCCASION
January 2	New Year's Day
January 26	Australia Day
April 6	Good Friday
April 9	Easter Monday
April 25	Anzac Day
June 11	Queen's Birthday
October 1	NSW Labour Day
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	Boxing Day

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Each Australian State runs and manages its own education system. In NSW, there are just over 2,100 public schools, including primary and high schools. Children in public schools typically start the school day at 9.00 am and finish at 3.00 pm.

NSW Government schools are free to Australian citizens and permanent residents, although you are asked to pay school fees, which are voluntary. Most parents pay school fees and expect to pay extra amounts during the year for school excursions and special performances. The NSW Government has changed enrolment fee structures for temporary visa holders. Guidelines are available by visiting the Department of Education and Communities website www.educationandcommunities.nsw.edu.au.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Private schools are competitively priced when compared to schools in Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong.

In NSW, there are about 900 private schools, catering for all age groups from primary to high school. Many private schools are affiliated with church organisations. Boarding facilities are provided in many schools and fees range from about \$2,000 to more than \$20,000 a year.

You can search for private schools at the Private Schools of Australia website www.isd.com.au for all non-government schools. You will usually have to contact the school in person to get an idea of fees and facilities.

PRE-SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

Education in NSW can start at a kindergarten or pre-school – the majority of pre-schools are privately run. Children from two to five years can attend these schools.

Most suburbs also have a long day-care centre where babies and under-fives can stay from about 7.00 am to 6.00 pm, catering for working parents. Day-care centres and pre-schools must be council approved. Local councils can provide lists of those in your area.

Fees vary from area to area. There is an opportunity to claim back some fees from the government if you work, depending on how much you earn and your visa status. To find out more visit the Centrelink website www.centrelink.gov.au.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

In NSW, children must be five years of age before July 31 in the year they start school, although gifted and talented children may be allowed to start school earlier. By law, children have to start school by their sixth birthday.

Children start school in kindergarten and continue until year six, when they are 11 or 12 years old and they leave primary school and go to high school.

VACCINATIONS

You might find that primary and pre-schools may insist that your children have been vaccinated against childhood illnesses such as polio, smallpox, measles and diphtheria. You will need to show a vaccination certificate. Schools also usually ask to see your child's birth certificate for proof of age.

HIGH SCHOOLS

In NSW, students enter high school in year seven at age 11 or 12. Students can legally leave school at age 15, however students remain at school if they want to take their School Certificate in year 10 or Higher School Certificate (HSC) in year 12.

Students earn a mark out of 100 at their HSC exams. Universities and colleges set a University Admission Index (UAI) out of 100 that students must achieve to gain entry to courses. As an example, would-be medical students usually have to earn a UAI of 96 to 99 to win a place in a medical course.

There are four kinds of Government-run high schools in NSW:

- local comprehensive high schools
- central schools – these schools service rural and isolated communities
- specialist high schools – there are sports, performing arts, technology, agricultural, creative arts, marine technology, rural technology, senior and language high schools. Entry requirements can include extra tests or auditions

- selective high schools – these accept students who attain the highest results in the Selective High School Test, held in June each year. Temporary visa holders are not eligible to enrol in selective high schools, the Conservatorium High School or opportunity classes in primary schools.

To find a primary or high school in your area use the Department of Education website search tool www.educationandcommunities.nsw.edu.au.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

For information on the entry requirements for universities and colleges visit the Universities Admissions Centre website www.uac.edu.au. This site also provides a course search facility and details of admission requirements for overseas students.

A full list of Australia’s universities and colleges is available from The Good Universities Guide website www.gooduniguide.com.au. The site lists courses and campuses and rates their facilities. It also has sections on courses for international students and corporate executives.

Colleges of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) are located across NSW and offer a wide range of diploma courses, which are usually shorter than university degree courses. Diplomas also tend to have more of a commercial focus and course types are widely varied compared to academic university courses. For example, you can do diplomas in car mechanics, building trades and plumbing.

The TAFE website www.tafe.nsw.edu.au lists courses, college locations and visitor and entry requirements for NSW residents and overseas students.

Adult education courses are available around NSW and topics range from computing and marketing to car mechanics and photography. Courses usually last for a term and are generally held in the evenings. To look at the range of courses available go to the Board of Adult and Community Education website www.bace.nsw.gov.au.





HEALTH CARE

AVAILABLE AND AFFORDABLE

Health care is readily available in NSW. Australia offers substantially cheaper private health insurance cover for a family than the US, the UK, Germany, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan.

NSW Health manages the State's public hospitals, community health centres and early childhood health centres. There are also privately run hospitals and clinics.

NSW has:

- 210 public hospitals across the State
- 280 community-run health centres
- 500 early childhood centres
- 84 private hospitals.

You can search for a public or private hospital in your area on the NSW Department of Health website www.health.nsw.gov.au.

Doctors or general practitioners (GPs) are located in every town and centre to treat everyday illnesses and refer patients to specialists for additional treatment if necessary. GPs are listed under "medical practitioner" in the Yellow Pages telephone directory, or can be found at Yellow Pages online www.yellowpages.com.au.

For life-threatening emergencies go directly to the nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency facility. If you need an ambulance call 000 immediately. For less urgent emergencies visit a GP or a medical centre.

MEDICARE

Medicare provides an online information kit with healthcare information for people who have recently arrived in Australia or who intend to move to or visit Australia.

The Australian Government has Reciprocal Health Care Agreements (RHCAs) with several countries. If you come from Finland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, the UK and the Republic of Ireland, you may have access to free or low-cost doctors and hospital treatment in public hospitals while you are in Australia. If your country of origin has an RHCA and you need medical treatment you should enrol at a Medicare office.

When you become a permanent resident of Australia you have access to full Medicare benefits. For information on enrolling with Medicare visit the Medicare travellers section of its website www.medicareaustralia.gov.au.

Medicines are not free in Australia. Prescription medicines are heavily subsidised with an average cost of about \$30. You may be able to claim some of the cost of medicines from your private insurance. You may also find some drugs are not permitted in Australia. If you rely on prescription drugs check with the manufacturer whether the drugs are available in Australia.

PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

Business people visiting Australia from countries without a RHCA need to buy travel insurance or will need to buy private health insurance in Australia. Check that insurance covers all hospital, ambulance and doctors' fees.

In Australia, 100% family cover for two adults and two children costs about \$4,000 a year – this is a lot more affordable than the US where the same cover can cost around \$18,000.

An overview of the private health insurance market, with lists of insurance companies and explanations of types of cover is available at the Private Health Insurance Administration Council website www.phiac.gov.au.



LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

PLENTY TO DO AND SEE

NSW is a culturally sophisticated State where leisure pursuits can range from the active – sailing, swimming, bushwalking, surfing and more – to the cultural – enjoying live theatre and music, going to the movies or dining out in top restaurants.

For more information on entertainment, events and things to do in Sydney and NSW, see www.visitnsw.com.

CLIMATE

The weather in NSW is temperate enough to allow a year-round outdoor lifestyle.

The further north you travel in the State the more temperate the weather becomes, and the further inland you travel the hotter and drier it gets. However, NSW's mountain ranges – the Blue Mountains and the Snowy Mountains – experience very cold weather and it snows every year in the Snowies. It rarely snows elsewhere in NSW and temperatures seldom fall below zero degrees Celsius, even in winter.

Compared to the Northern Hemisphere the seasons are reversed: winter is in the middle of the year and summer at the end.

Spring	September to November
Summer	December to February
Autumn	March to May
Winter	June to August

Sydney experiences 138 wet days a year with an average annual rainfall of 1,223 mm. However, the city is renowned for its sunshine, with an average of only 23 days a year when the sun doesn't shine. The average temperature ranges for Sydney are:

January	18.6°–25.8°C
July	8°–16.2°C

For detailed information on specific locations in NSW visit the Bureau of Meteorology website www.bom.gov.au.

SPORT

Australia is a leader in the Asia Pacific for access to quality sporting and recreational facilities.

There are many excellent local and indoor sporting facilities in every town and in most areas of NSW. You'll find general sporting club information at www.sportnet.com.au and information on the range of activities available in NSW at www.ausport.gov.au/participating.

NSW has more golf courses than any other Australian State. For information on golf courses in NSW visit www.ausgolf.com.au which has course reviews, rankings, listings and information on golf resorts and tours around the State.

The most popular spectator sports in NSW include: Rugby League www.nrl.com.au, Australian Football or Aussie Rules www.afl.com.au and Rugby Union www.nsw.rugby.com.au.

Soccer is growing in popularity as a spectator and participation sport. You'll find information on NSW soccer clubs at Soccer NSW www.soccernsw.com.au. All football codes have amateur leagues, and participation in these weekend sports is high. "Footie season" runs from February to September.

During the Australian summer, cricket is the game of choice – at least to watch. For information on NSW cricket facilities and clubs go to the Cricket NSW site cricketnsw.com.au. Another popular sport is tennis. The Tennis NSW site www.tennisaustralia.org.au provides information on upcoming competitions and sporting news.

The most popular women's sport in Australia is netball – 1.2 million women participate in this game during the winter months. For detailed information go to www.netball.asn.au.

NSW is a bushwalker's paradise. The Sydney Bushwalkers website www.bushwalkers.org.au is a great starting point if you want an idea of where to go and what to take with you.

The Snowy Mountains offer excellent skiing for three months of the year. You can find more information at the official Snowy Mountains tourism site www.snowymountains.com.au.

WATER SPORTS

Water activities of every kind are very popular in NSW; the coastal areas of NSW have some of the best swimming and surfing beaches you'll find anywhere in the world, with clean, sparkling, blue water and minimal pollution. NSW's coastal waters are warm enough to swim in from September to May. For detailed information visit Coastalwatch www.coastalwatch.com or Surf It Australia www.surfit.com.au.

When you combine the inland lakes and rivers with the State's beaches you'll find you can swim, kayak, surf and water ski just about anywhere in the State. Sailing is also popular and accessible – yacht charter companies are dotted along the coast and in the State's spectacular waterways. The Yachting Association of NSW website www.nsw.yachting.org.au has comprehensive information on relevant clubs and organisations, sailing events and weather updates.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Sydney is a dynamic cultural centre that has a rich year-round program of world-class performances, outdoor events and festivals that make the city's outdoor and cultural lifestyle unique.

The city is home to a range of internationally acclaimed arts organisations including:

- Opera Australia
www.opera-australia.org.au
- The Australian Ballet
www.australianballet.com.au
- Sydney Dance Company
www.sydneydance.com.au
- Sydney Theatre Company
www.sydneytheatre.com.au
- Sydney Symphony Orchestra
www.sso.com.au
- Musica Viva
www.musicaviva.com.au
- Bangarra Dance theatre
www.bangarra.com.au

These are supported by a range of world-class performing and exhibition venues such as:

- Sydney Opera House
www.sydneyperahouse.com, which has theatres for music, opera and drama
- Angel Place Recital Hall
www.cityrecitalhall.com
- Art Gallery of NSW
www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au
- Museum of Contemporary Art
www.mca.com.au

CitySearch www.citysearch.com.au has listings of events and shows in and around Sydney, as well as theatres, live music venues, nightclubs, movie theatres, art galleries and much more.

The Sydney Festival www.sydneymfestival.org.au/info is held every January and includes many free outdoor events.

Another well-known event is Sydney's annual Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras www.mardigras.com.au, a festival of performances and parties that culminates in a massive parade.

Many of the music, food and wine festivals in country NSW have attracted an international following, such as the famous Tamworth Country Music Festival.

MOVIE STUDIOS

Surrounded by Sydney's spectacular locations and with state-of-the-art production facilities, Sydney's Fox Studios is in high demand as a centre for shooting and producing films. *Mission Impossible II*, the *Star Wars* prequels, *Moulin Rouge* and *The Matrix* were filmed there and many of the special effects in *The Matrix* were created in Sydney. For more information go to www.foxstudiosaustralia.com.

DINING OUT – FRESH AND SENSATIONAL

Australian chefs are in big demand in the top restaurants of London and New York, reflecting the sophistication and diversity of our food scene.

Visitors can enjoy high quality and abundant fresh food cafes and restaurants in Sydney and across NSW. Most town centres have Thai, Indian, Italian and Chinese restaurants and you'll usually find somewhere that offers freshly caught, beautifully cooked seafood.

Sydney is a centre for contemporary cuisine that offers an eclectic blend of the world's finest food created with the freshest ingredients.

CitySearch www.citysearch.com.au has comprehensive listings of restaurants throughout Sydney.

In regions like the Hunter Valley, two hours north of Sydney, the Riverina region in the south-west of the State and the central western wine hubs of Orange, Mudgee and Cowra, you'll find world-class wines to rival the best produced in California's Napa Valley or the hallowed wineries of Europe. For an overview of the Australian wine industry, with details of regions and wineries, visit the Winetitles website www.winetitles.com.au.

For general information on entertainment and leisure in NSW go to the Visit NSW website www.visitnsw.com.

TRAVEL AND HOLIDAYS

Because the NSW landscape varies dramatically, the State offers a vast range of holiday destinations and experiences within its borders. This variety makes it easy to get away to somewhere interesting for a weekend.

Accommodation types are diverse – you can stay in luxurious resorts, child-friendly hotels, holiday apartments, private retreats, modest motels or just camp in the wilderness.

The diversity of NSW's holiday destinations is captured in the following websites:

- www.australia.com – Tourism Australia's website
- www.visitnsw.com
- www.mynrma.com.au/travel/holidays/australia.htm
- www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks – the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service website.



LIVING IN REGIONAL NSW

NSW is a great place to live and work. The regions of NSW offer many similar work opportunities, lifestyle benefits and services to those in major cities:

- 2.5 million people live in regional NSW
- they enjoy tropical to alpine climates
- NSW regional cities provide full amenities and facilities
- housing affordability is good.

Regional NSW welcomes skilled migrants.

NSW will sponsor applicants with skills required in regional areas under Australia's Skilled Regional Sponsored visa program. This visa requires sponsorship from a State Government or a Regional Certifying Body.

YOUR SKILLS ARE IN DEMAND

Please visit www.business.nsw.gov.au/live-and-work-in-nsw for the complete list of skills in demand in regional NSW. The following is a list of indicative skills that are in high demand in NSW.

Professionals: engineers, dentists, psychiatrists, doctors and nurses.

Trades: welders, fitters, sheet trades workers, motor mechanics, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics, electricians and toolmakers.

NSW REGIONS

Following are the most active regions of NSW in the State's migration program.

Riverina (Wagga Wagga)

Riverina has an international reputation for food and fibre manufacturing. The region is Australia's largest producer of wine, hosts Australian defence facilities plus R&D clusters in agriculture and fisheries. www.rdariverina.org.au

Murray (Albury)

Straddling the Murray River in southern NSW, the Murray region has enterprises in manufacturing, engineering and computer technology. Emerging industries include aquaculture, forestry and wood products. Tourism is growing with ski slopes, fishing and water sports. www.rdamurray.org.au

Orana (Dubbo)

Dubbo is a major manufacturing and service centre for food processing, mining and viticulture. The region is a fast growing tourist destination with attractions including Western Plains Zoo, Lightning Ridge opal mines and Mudgee wineries. www.rdaorana.org.au

Central West (Orange, Bathurst)

Close to the major population centre of Sydney, the Central West has a diverse economy rich in coal, gold, copper, timber and water. Horticulture, dairy farming and viticulture are growing. Two university campuses cement a strong education sector. www.rdacentralwest.org.au

Northern Inland (Armidale,Tamworth)

Live stock production and breeding, vehicle body and agricultural equipment manufacturing and distance education are among the diverse range of industries well represented in New England.
www.rdani.org.au

Illawarra (Wollongong)

The leading producer of steel and steel products in South East Asia, the region has a wealth of natural resources, as well as manufacturing and engineering industries. The region is emerging as an ICT centre.
www.rdaillawarra.com.au

Hunter (Newcastle)

The Hunter generates one third of NSW exports with its chief industries being power generation, coal and mining, the equine industry and winemaking.
www.rdahunter.org.au

Southern Inland (Goulburn)

Close to the nation's capital, Canberra, the region attracts a range of businesses and institutions that support the Australian Government and educational institutions such as the Australian National University, Institute of Sport and the Australian Defence Force Academy.
www.rdaasi.org.au

For further information go to
www.business.nsw.gov.au/live-and-work-in-nsw.



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