



2026

Sydney City Guide

Your guide to moving to Sydney





Useful links for students arriving soon

Need assistance getting to your accommodation?

Students may be eligible for an airport pick up service from the airport to their nominated accommodation destination. Get in touch with your University and arrange an airport pickup service.

- What you can/cannot bring into Australia: [Can you bring it](#) | [Australian Border Force](#)
- Learn about driving with an overseas licence or permit in New South Wales: [Requirement for overseas license holders](#) | [NSW](#)
- For more information, head to the [Study NSW website](#).

An aerial photograph of Sydney, Australia, taken at dusk. The city's skyline is visible, with numerous skyscrapers and buildings illuminated by city lights. The Sydney Harbour Bridge is prominent in the foreground, spanning the water. A small boat is visible in the water in the lower left corner. The sky is a mix of orange and blue hues.

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IDP Sydney

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Welcome To Sydney

Your guide to moving to Sydney

Natural beauty, vibrant culture,
and iconic landmarks

Studying in a new country is both exciting and challenging! This guide will help you get the most out of your time in Australia; from getting to know the lifestyle, fun places to visit, accommodation, how to find a casual job and more.

Our friendly IDP Sydney Counsellors are here to support you on your study journey too. If you have questions about life in Australia, course/university opportunities or visas, we're here to help.

Don't be shy, call, email us or book a counselling appointment online.





Accommodation Options

Settling In

Accommodation

Depending on your lifestyle and budget, you will be able to find the right place to suit you. It all starts with knowing the options...



Prepare

Private Rental

Price range: AUD\$350 - \$700 per week

(depending on the suburb, whether you rent a room or an entire property, and how many people you share with).

If you love your independence, a private rental may be for you! In this style of accommodation, you rent an apartment or house, either alone or with other people. If you share with others, you can opt to rent a shared room or a private room.

While living alone can be a great experience, it's more expensive. Private rentals can be furnished or unfurnished.

Home Stay

Price range: AUD\$340–\$52per week

(depending on the location, room type, and whether meals are included).

In a homestay arrangement, you'll live with an Australian family in their home. The host family covers utilities and internet. In certain arrangements, meals are also covered. Those craving a genuine Australian experience will love this option, as it allows you to live with locals. You'll also enjoy the extra support you receive from your host family.

That said, there is no guarantee that your homestay will be close to your education provider, so you may have to manage a long commute. Have a look at public transport options to see what your journey to campus will be like.



Choosing a place to live is an exciting part about studying overseas



Purpose-Built Student Accommodation

Price range: AUD \$320–\$700 per week

(depending on the accommodation provider, room type, lease length, and the services and facilities included).

In these large centres, you'll find apartments of all sizes, complete with furnished rooms, internet and 24/7 support. These buildings are typically located very close to campus and other local amenities. However, the internet can be a tad slow and the rooms may be smaller than average.

To ensure you choose a high-quality student accommodation, check the National Property Accreditation Scheme (NPAS). Properties accredited under the NPAS meet the industry-led minimum standards for student safety and wellness

Residential College

Price range: AUD \$400–\$950+ per week
(depending on the college, room type, and whether catering and other services are included).

Residential colleges provide a traditional university living experience with fully furnished rooms, academic support, study facilities and a strong student community.

Many colleges also include meals, cleaning services, sporting facilities and social programs.

While these inclusions offer convenience, residential colleges are typically one of the more expensive accommodation options.



Overseas Student Health Cover

Settling In

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

Why do I need Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)? It helps cover you for medical expenses whilst you're studying in Australia, including:



GP/Doctor or Specialist visits
(e.g X-rays and blood tests)



Emergency ambulance
services



Hospital visits



Some of the cost
of prescription medicines

If you have a medical emergency

If you have a life-threatening medical emergency, go to your nearest public hospital emergency department or call 000 (Emergency Services) immediately for help. All public hospitals have a 24-hour emergency and casualty department, so you will always be able to get help.

If it's not an emergency, locate your nearest GP by visiting the official website of your OSHC provider, book an appointment with a doctor by phone or online. The doctor will treat you and determine if you need medicine or need to see a specialist. Alternatively, you can also visit your university's clinic.

Learn more about Overseas Student Health Cover in Australia from these commonly asked about topics at our website.



Australian Health
Care system



Common
healthcare words



Getting started with your
Student Health Cover



Health and
safety tips

A young woman with long, dark, wavy hair is looking down at a smartphone in her hands. She is wearing a light-colored plaid jacket over a white shirt. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a fence and some greenery.

Banking

Settling In

One of the most important things to do when you arrive in Australia is to open a bank account. Learn how to make international money transactions, pay bills and manage everyday expenses.

Getting started >



1. Choose your bank

Australia offers various banks for international students to choose from



2. Choose an account

1. Everyday Account

The most common bank account type, used for day- to-day expenses.

2. Savings Account

This is where you can store money that you don't need to use straight away.



3. Opening a Bank Account

Take your passport into the bank, as well as your tax identification number from your home country (if you have one).

Often, there are discounts available for students, make sure you bring student ID and letter of enrolment when you visit the bank to access these

commbank.com.au
nab.com.au
anz.com.au
westpac.com.au



4. Tips

Mobile banking is popular in Australia, making it easy to do online banking via mobile, like paying your friends or paying at supermarkets or cafes by tapping your phone

Common bank words:

BPAY - Popular bill paying service allowing you to pay bills online

Direct debits:

Transfers money from one account to another. Can be commonly used for paying health insurance or any kind of recurring payments internationally and online.

A photograph of three young people laughing joyfully on a city street. In the foreground, a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a pink hoodie, is laughing heartily, looking upwards and to the right. Next to her, a young man with dark hair, wearing a blue denim jacket over a beige sweater, is also laughing, looking towards the camera. In the background, partially visible, is another young woman with blonde hair, also laughing. The background shows a blurred city street with buildings and street signs.

Food & Shopping

Settling In



Food & Shopping

Here are some key shopping locations for students in Sydney:

Pitt Street Mall – Located in the city center, this mall features a mix of high-street brands and designer labels, making it a popular shopping destination for students and tourists alike.

Queen Victoria Building (QVB) – Known for its beautiful architecture from the 1890s, this historic building houses a wide range of stores, offering everything from fashion to unique gifts.

Paddy's Market in Chinatown – Operating Wednesday through Sunday, Paddy's Market offers great deals on fashion, food, gadgets, and more, catering to students on a budget.

The Rocks Markets – Held on weekends, The Rocks Markets provide a selection of unique jewelry, homewares, and gifts, ideal for those seeking something special.

Chinatown Grocery Stores – Chinatown is home to a variety of Asian grocery stores, perfect for students looking for imported goods and ingredients.

Central Park Mall in Chippendale – This multi-level shopping center includes fashion brands, discount stores, an Asian market, and a Woolworths, making it a convenient one-stop shop for students.

Major Supermarkets

coles



Major Department Stores

1. Major Department Stores

MYER **DAVID JONES**

2. Sporting Goods

rebel **JD**

3. Everyday Clothing

ZARA **H&M** **COTTON:ON**

4. Homewares (Everyday Essentials)

Kmart **BIGW**

TARGET

5. Electronics, Stationery & Appliances

JB HI-FI

**Harvey
Norman**

**THE
GOOD
GUYS**

Officeworks

6. Hardware Store (DIY)

**BUNNINGS
warehouse**



A silver and yellow high-speed train is stopped at a station platform. The train has large windows reflecting the sky and surrounding buildings. A modern, multi-story building with blue balconies is visible in the background. The sky is cloudy. The train's doors are bright yellow. A blue accessibility sign is visible on the side of the train. The platform has a blue and yellow tactile paving strip.

Transportation

Exploring Sydney

Getting Around

Navigating Sydney's public transport system is straightforward for international students, offering various modes to explore the city efficiently. Here's a detailed guide:

The Opal card is a reusable smartcard for fare payments across Sydney's public transport network, including trains, buses, ferries, and light rail. International students are generally required to use an Adult Opal card, as concession fares are typically reserved for Australian citizens and permanent residents. You can purchase and top up Opal cards at numerous retailers, online, or via the Opal Travel app.

Metro

Sydney Metro is Australia's first fully accessible, automated driverless train network. A driverless train every 4 minutes during peak times, 5 minutes between peak periods on week days and 10 minutes at other times, means you'll never have to wait too long.

Trains

Sydney Trains operates an extensive suburban rail network, connecting the city center with outer suburbs. Trains run frequently, especially during peak hours, making them a reliable option for commuting to universities and exploring the city.

Buses

Buses cover areas not serviced by trains, including many university campuses. They operate on a comprehensive network, with routes and schedules available through the Transport for NSW website and the Opal Travel app.

Ferries

Sydney Ferries provide a scenic way to travel across the harbor, connecting the central business district with suburbs like Manly and Parramatta. Ferry services are integrated with the Opal system, allowing seamless transfers between different modes of transport.

Light Rail

The light rail network includes the Inner West Light Rail, running from Central Station to Dulwich Hill, and the CBD and South East Light Rail, connecting Circular Quay to Randwick and Kingsford. These services provide convenient links through the city and inner suburbs.



By utilizing these diverse transportation options, international students can navigate Sydney conveniently and efficiently, enhancing their study experience and exploration of the city.

Planning Your Journey

Transport for NSW offers a [Trip Planner](#) tool, which provides real-time information on routes, schedules, and service updates.

This is particularly useful for international students unfamiliar with the city's transport network.

Accessibility

Sydney's public transport is designed to be accessible to all passengers. Features include priority seating, wheelchair access, and audio-visual announcements. For detailed information on accessible travel, refer to the [Transport for NSW accessibility guide](#).

Cycling & Walking

Sydney promotes active transport with numerous cycling paths and pedestrian-friendly areas. Bike-sharing schemes are also available, providing an eco-friendly alternative for short trips.

Regional Services

NSW TrainLink operates regional train and coach services connecting Sydney with regional New South Wales and interstate destinations, facilitating travel beyond the metropolitan area.





Popular Day Trips From Sydney

Exploring Sydney



1. Blue Mountains



49 Minutes Via Bus

Hike through some of the most beautiful mountains Australia has to offer. Soak up the spectacular views of sites like the Three Sisters, a rock formation of deep cultural significance. According to Aboriginal legend, the rocks represent three sisters who were turned to stone - hence the name. Ready to relax after your hike? Head to the nearby town of Leura and enjoy coffee with a view.

2. Newcastle



2.3 hours Via Bus

A former industrial port city, Newcastle has become a vibrant city with pristine beaches, local markets and cultural attractions. In summer, cool off at the picturesque Bogey Hole, a pristine swimming hole south of Newcastle Beach. You can also head to Newcastle's nature reserves, Blackbutt or the Hunter Wetlands for spectacular walking trails and possible wildlife encounters.





3. Port Stephens



2.3 Hours Via Bus

This coastal town is famous for its vibrant marine life. Dolphins live on this part of the coast year-round, so you can book a dolphin watching cruise whenever you're in town. In some spots, you can even join them in the water! From May to September, book a whale watching cruise. With a bit of luck, you'll see the majestic humpback whale on its annual migration

4. Bowral



1.3 Hours Via Bus

Bowral is home to the annual Tulip Time Festival, one of the biggest floral events in Australia. Its proximity to nature means it's easy to hop onto a bushwalking trail in the nearby Bangadilly National Park or cycle a nature trail. Not in the mood for physical activity? No problem! Instead, take a wine tour or enjoy the delicious food Bowral has to offer.





Events & Festivals

Exploring Sydney

Events & Festivals In Sydney

There is something for everyone in Sydney.



Sydney Film Festival

A renowned two-week festival celebrating both local and international films, offering a great cultural experience for film enthusiasts.



Sydney Fringe Festival

This festival showcases independent artists across various forms, including visual arts, live music, and performance, providing an immersive artistic experience.



Sydney Comedy Festival

Featuring famous comedians and new talent, this festival is perfect for those who enjoy humor and want a taste of Sydney's comedic talent.



Sydney Writers Festival

An insightful gathering of top writers, thinkers, and creatives from Australia and beyond, ideal for students interested in literature and ideas.



Sydney Festival

A vibrant event with a mix of theatre, dance, music, circus, and visual arts, making it an all-encompassing cultural experience.



Sydney WorldPride

Celebrating the LGBTQIA+ community with over 300 events, including the iconic Mardi Gras Parade, this festival is a major highlight on Sydney's event calendar.



Make New Friends

Exploring Sydney



Being in a new city, away from your family and friends, you will want to meet like-minded people. Follow our tips for socialising and you will be surprised in how making friends is easier than expected!

- Sharing accommodation is a great way to make friends. In student accommodation, you'll often be living with students who study nearby or even at the same institution.
- Student clubs - Many institutions have their own clubs or societies. You can find clubs with specific interests like Harry Potter, badminton, Mahjong, debating, beauty, getting fit and many more.
- Meetup.com and Eventbrite.com.au make it easy to find people who share the same interests/hobbies. It's fun to keep up your hobbies in your new city, and even better to find friends to share the experience with.
- Volunteer in the community - Volunteer organisations are always on the lookout for eager volunteers. This is also a great way to meet other like-minded people. [Go volunteer](#) is also a popular platform to find volunteer work.
- [Join the IDP Student Community](#) - Connect with current international students, ask questions, and hear real experiences about studying and living in Australia. You can get practical advice on everything from finding accommodation and part-time work to settling into student life, while building friendships before and after you arrive. Best of all, it's free to join.

A young man with dark hair and safety glasses is looking upwards and gesturing with his right hand. He is wearing a grey turtleneck sweater. In the background, there is a large, blue, mechanical structure, possibly a robot or a piece of industrial equipment. To his right, another person wearing a striped shirt is partially visible.

Work While You Study

Build a Career In Australia

Work While You Study

As an international student on a student visa, you're able to work a certain number of hours a week in Australia.

Casual employment while studying is a good way to learn about Australian culture and meet people.

Take a look at our [Careers and Employability](#) page for more information and download a complimentary copy of IDP's LinkedIn Guide for students.



Be mindful if you have any work restriction on your visa and ensure to check your visa conditions.

- If you are a member of the family unit of a primary student visa holder, you must not work in Australia until they have started their course.
- You must not work in Australia before your course of study commences.
- Looking for a job in a new country can feel daunting, but don't hesitate to drop your resume and ask.
- The hospitality industry is a great place to start and many popular venues will welcome international students. Don't be afraid to drop your resume or ask directly at shops and restaurants.
- You can also use popular online job search websites like LinkedIn, Seek, Jora or Career One.

For more valuable advice on working in Melbourne or in Australia, check out the Study Melbourne website.

Applying for an internship is another way to gain work experience. If you're looking for an internship opportunity, speak to one of our counsellors for ongoing opportunities or visit our website.



Join IDP Thrive

Are you an international student who's recently arrived in Australia? IDP's Got You!

The Thrive Program focuses on delivering a range of support services and benefits to our students. These services provide invaluable information and skills to our students while guiding them to success at every step of their study journey in Australia.

Join the Thrive Program to gain access to a range of exciting offers including exclusive events, reward programs, internships, referrals, and network support.



Download the IDP Live App

IDP Live app features loads of helpful tips, advice, personal stories and videos from international students and institutions around the world to help you prepare for your own overseas adventure.



Follow our socials





Migration & Visa Services

Are you an international student or migrant who dreams of studying, working or even settling permanently in Australia? If so, you are in the right place!

IDP can help you with every step of the visa application process, from understanding the requirements to submitting your application.

Scan the QR code to book a consultation with our migration agents.



We offer a wide range of visa services:

- [Student Visa](#)
- [Temporary Graduate Visa](#)
- [General Skilled Migration Visa](#)
- [Partner and Family Visa](#)
- [Employer Sponsored Visa](#)
- [Other Visas](#)



**Sydney
Paramatta**

Get To Know The Sydney Team



Sydney CBD

Get To Know Our Local Team And Services

IDP is a global leader in international education services that helps people study abroad.

As experts in international student placements, our key services include:

- Course selection & guidance with the application process
- Visa help & assistance with preparation of necessary documents.
- Consultation with registered migration agents.
- Help with choosing the right student health cover, accommodation, banking options & money transfer.
- IELTS test booking
- IELTS preparation

IDP is a lively network of students and alumni buzzing across Australia. When you arrive, get in touch with us and we'll help you settle in.



IDP helps ambitious students reach their dream destination and thrive on arrival.

IDP Sydney City Office

Office location

- WeWork, Level 2, Office 02-106 383
George St, Sydney NSW 2000
(between Optus and McDonald's)

Phone

- +61 2 8260 3300

Opening hours

- 9:00AM - 5:00PM

IDP Sydney Parramatta Office

Office location

- Suite 2.03, Level 2, 87 Marsden Street,
Parramatta NSW 2150

Phone

- +61 2 8260 3326

Opening hours

- 10:00AM - 5:30PM



If you have questions about how to navigate through all that's happening in Australia, course opportunities or visas, speak to us.

[Call, email us or book a counselling appointment online.](#)



