

Sensational Sydney

Sydney is a lively and friendly city, with a wealth of things to do and outdoor activities to enjoy, as AMY BAKER reports.

There is nothing better than a morning or afternoon swim before or after class at Bondi or one of the many beautiful beaches that surround Sydney," says Mark Lucas at Aspect Sydney, "summing up the great lifestyle that many international students come to enjoy in the state capital of New South Wales.

Sydney basks in sunshine for much of the year, ensuring that students can enjoy its outdoor cafés, parks and open-air beach and barbeque facilities. For beach lovers, Sydney is a dream destination. As Barbara Fras, Marketing Coordinator at Wollongong University College, Sydney Centre, points out, "Sydney's beaches are truly spectacular. Bondi Beach is well known for its surf and beach culture, and the area offers an eclectic mix of cafés and shops. However, there are many beaches to choose from."

There are also other ways to enjoy Sydney's temperate climate. Fras points out that there are many scenic walks around the harbour and city that students can enjoy. "The Spit to Manly walk begins near a marina in Mosman, a wealthy North Shore enclave, and takes the intrepid walker into areas of natural beauty, far from the urban din," she says.

Sydney's appeal lies in its natural splendour, along with a cutting-edge cultural scene and tourist attractions that rate Sydney among the world's most exciting cities. "Sydney is famous for so many places to see and things to do, but for most students, the harbour and beaches are the most popular attractions," says Lucas. "Seeing



Darling Harbour

Sydney's Darling Harbour boasts an Imax cinema, Sega World, the Sydney Aquarium and Cockle Bay Wharf, which has many outdoor cafés and restaurants. A monorail links it with central Sydney



Sydney from a boat on the harbour is [a] breathtaking city view. One of the newer attractions that should not be missed is the Sydney Harbour Bridge climb."

Other tourist attractions include the world-renowned Sydney Opera House, which is located in the harbour, and the highest lookout point in the city, the Sydney

Tower, which provides views across the skyline of the city. The Observation Deck and restaurant, at 305 metres high, is said to be the highest observation deck in the Southern Hemisphere.

As a state capital, Sydney also has many museums and art galleries, including the National Maritime Museum, the

Museum of Sydney and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, which charges no admission fee for its permanent exhibitions. Fras points out that there is plenty here to interest students, even those of a younger age group. "Some museums, such as the Powerhouse Museum [focusing on science and design], have interactive and contemporary displays for younger students," she explains. "There are also informative backstage tours of the Sydney Opera House."

Being a large city, Sydney also has many academic institutions, so students have a choice of lan-



Agent viewpoint

"With one of the best harbours in the world and plenty of exciting things to do, Sydney is the most popular city for tourists and, of course, overseas students. Whether students wish to study for a long period of time or a short time, they have a choice of many schools offering English and tertiary studies."

Richard Lim, Sewoo Education Centre, Australia

"All students agree that Sydney is a lovely city, which draws students from all over the world. They have the [chance] to visit a wide range of tourist attractions such as the Sydney Opera House, the famous Fish Market [and] Darling Harbour [which is] surrounded by lovely restaurants and lively nightclubs overlooking the water. Sydney is a very "tourist-friendly" city so visitors have little trouble getting settled. The shops, bars, restaurants and nightclubs are diverse, providing something to suit everyone's taste."

Rosemarie Perrochon, OISE, Switzerland

"Sydney combines a thriving business district with historic attractions, situated around a magnificent harbour. Accommodation is plentiful in Sydney, from host families to hostels, hotels and apartments, all of which can be found close to schools and universities. Food is sumptuous and international, whether it be Italian, Indian, Thai, Chinese, Greek or Spanish. [Students] will have a once-in-a-lifetime experience in Sydney."

Pip Panasbodi, CP Education Australia, Australia

Sydney's impressive beaches are one of its many attractions (main picture)

Tiang Lim, Principal of OISE Sydney Intensive School of English, points out that there are many unknown aspects of Sydney that students will enjoy getting to know in their free time. "There are lots of markets in nearby suburbs, and friendly and cosy pubs with Karaoke facilities," she says, adding that staff at the school do

their best to help students get the most out of their stay.

Local Sydneysiders are also very helpful and welcoming, according to Rudge, who says that international students enjoy the friendliness shown by the city's inhabitants and the relaxed informality of the Australian way of life in general. "Sydney is one of the most multicultural cities in the world and this is often a shock to overseas students when they arrive," she says. "This was not the case 20 years ago and it is one of the reasons why overseas students [now] feel so welcome here."



Royal Easter Show

Locals and tourists flock to the 12-day Royal Easter Show, which features livestock contests, rodeos, sideshows and exhibits, and begins with a parade of animals through Sydney's centre

guage schools and further education options if they intend to continue their studies there. Fras says,

"Students have access to libraries, computer labs and other research facilities that help them with their studies. They can strike a good balance between lifestyle and academic studies in Sydney and the surrounding area."

Lucas agrees. "With dedicated staff for all areas of study and life in Sydney, there is always help available for all our students," he says. "Our new premises opening in early July offer world-class facilities – Internet access on 40 computers, a café with an

outdoor balcony, and a new multimedia library and self-access centre."

Many schools make

an effort to incorporate the city into their daily language classes. Amanda Rudge, Director of Marketing at Australian Pacific College (APC), explains, "APC has a curriculum which seeks to incorporate the local culture and environment into language learning as much as possible. College excursions, which include English language learning activities, include visits to Taronga Zoo to experience [Australia's] native wildlife, football matches, the Sydney Royal Easter Show and shopping activities."



Hyde Park

Originally the site of the colony's first racetrack and cricket pitch, Hyde Park now contains a grand avenue of trees, the Anzac Memorial, fountains and a giant public chess board