

Australia's all-round appeal

Australia is ideal for students who enjoy outdoor pursuits, open-air festivals and activities. Many students also appreciate the welcoming nature of local Aussies, as AMY BAKER finds out.

Many of our students come to school with their class books under one arm and their surf board or boogie board under the other," says Tim Eckenfels, Director of Marketing at International House (IH) Sydney in Manly, which like many other Australian language schools, capitalises on the beach appeal of its location. "We allow students to keep their surfboards and swim gear in a store room while they are in class," he adds.

The beautiful coastline is also a draw for language travel students studying at either one of the Griffith University English Language Institutes in Nathan or the Gold Coast. "The Griffith University English Language Institutes are situated in a coastal region of Australia where beautiful beach regions prevail," recounts Gina Kerneke at the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages at Griffith University in Nathan. "Southeast Queensland is an ideal place to study, with a subtropical climate and a safe, multicultural environment," she adds.

The beach lifestyle is an integral part of Australia's appeal, and with so many of the country's

towns and cities situated near the sea, beach activities are plentiful and very popular with international students. Many students incorporate beach sports and barbies into their regular extra-curricular activities. "We offer at least one beach activity every week," relates Eckenfels. "These include beach volleyball, surfing lessons, or bush walks along the harbourside of Manly."

However, this is only one part of Australia's attraction as a study destination. The country's great year-round weather in most parts of the country means that students can enjoy a whole range of outdoor activities. At ANU College in Canberra, the capital of Australia, Danielle Evans points out that international students can enjoy mountain bike riding, horse riding, sailing, golfing and fishing during their free time. "We are the 'Bush' Capital City of Australia," she says. "The first thing students may notice is that we are surrounded by bush [areas of natural vegetation] and



hills that entice students to take up bushwalking [and other outdoor activities]."

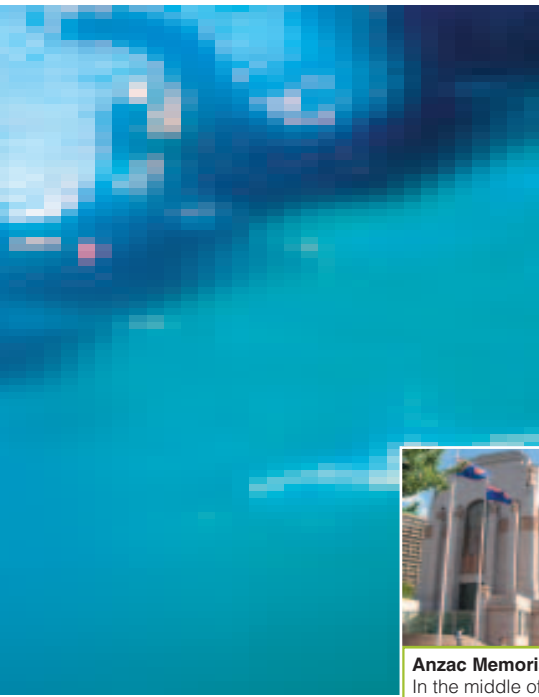
Canberra is not as popular with international students as some other Australian cities, but as Evans points out, there is plenty for students to do, and the city is well situated between the coast and the snowfields. With the advent of low-cost airlines

in Australia such as Virgin Blue and Jetstar, more students can consider flying between some of the main cities in the country for long weekends or travel after their studies. Evans comments, "We are less than an hour by plane to Sydney."

Canberra itself is spacious, clean and pretty, says Evans. It is also home to some of the best museums and galleries in Australia as well as the New Parliament House, which is one of the prime tourist attractions in the city. Students here can enjoy a lively nightlife scene that belies the city's reputation as the city of politicians and professionals. Evans relates, "Students enjoy eating out in the many restaurants or outdoor cafés in the city square and enjoy dancing at one of our many clubs." She adds that live music takes place every week, while at weekends, students can visit Sunday markets and browse through the stalls.



Parliament House, Canberra
Situated at the end of Commonwealth Avenue, Parliament House was built at the top of a hill and has its roof grassed over to preserve the shape of the original hilltop



Swimming with dolphins off the coast of Perth in Western Australia (main picture)

tute of Tafe, Peg Winton, Educational Manager of the International Student Unit, says that Adelaide is committed to putting a positive emphasis on welcoming international students. “The major streets of

“A common pronunciation problem for some of our European students is when they order a cappuccino, pronounced by them as ‘cuppucine’. When said quickly this has often been confused as ordering a ‘cup of tea’ and they are always a bit shocked when they receive a cup of tea instead of their coffee!”

Leanne Everett, Language Links, Perth

Adelaide are festooned with welcome banners for international students during March of every year,” she says, highlighting efforts made during the start of the academic year there.

To further enable students to fit in with the community, Winton adds, “Education Adelaide, in conjunction with the city council, runs a welcome

function with the Lord Mayor at the Town Hall and a farewell function with the Governor at the Governor’s residence.” Adelaide

itself is in a superb setting, with centrally-located parks as well as the hills of the Mount Lofty ranges and Barossa Valley vineyards within easy reach of the city.

Food and eating out is one of the city’s great passions. Winton notes, “Adelaide has one of the most unique fresh food markets in Australia and in close proximity are shopping venues specialising in various cultural cuisines, both for dining and food preparation.” She also highlights the three-day world music festival that takes place in the city, Womadelaide. “Students are encouraged to attend these events,” she says.

In Perth in Western Australia, Shelley McPhee at Phoenix English Language Academy is also keen to point out some of the city’s many festivals and events. She lists these as including “the Salomon Masters surfing competition in Margaret River,



Anzac Memorial, Sydney
In the middle of Hyde Park, the Anzac Memorial has a free exhibition on the ground floor commemorating the nine overseas conflicts that Australians have fought in

Adelaide is another city that is not always top of the list for international students, despite its attractive location on the Torrens River and the warm welcome given to international students. At Adelaide Insti-



Telstra Rally Australia – one of Australia’s major international sporting events – and the Hopman Cup tennis tournament, which plays host to first-class players from around the world.” Situated on the west coast of Australia, a considerable distance from Australia’s famous east coast cities, Perth also enjoys one of the best climates in the country.



Moralana scenic drive, SA
Running 140 kilometres through the Flinders Ranges, this scenic drive takes in the Bunyeroo and Brachina gorges and goes around Wilpena Pound – an important Aboriginal ceremonial site

McPhee says, “Perth enjoys more hours of sunshine than any other capital city in Australia. Its warm, sunny climate enables students to make the most of outdoor events and activities such as casual sports, winery tours, outdoor cinemas and much more.”

The Australian city most famous for its entertainment and beachlife is, of course, Sydney in New South Wales. But language schools in Sydney are keen to point out another reason students enjoy themselves so much – because of the friendliness of the local population. “Australians are generally very open and friendly, and many foreigners love the country because of the way they are welcomed by the locals,” comments Kirsty Bolton of Embassy CES in Sydney.

Eckenfels in nearby Manly, one of Sydney’s most famous and popular beaches, agrees. He relates, “[Our students] tell us they most enjoy the friendly Aussie personality and welcoming spirit of the country. ‘Everyone talks to me and is so nice’ is a commonly related quote.” □

Agent viewpoint

“Perth is my favourite city in Australia and many of my clients have already had a friend or relative who stayed there. There’s a very friendly, open-minded atmosphere there and lots of things to do such as sport, cultural activities, excursions or, last but not least, the beautiful beaches. My clients are generally between 20 and 28 years old and, in their spare time, they love sport, especially swimming, tennis or even rugby and of course during the weekend they take longer trips into the country. In June, July and August I mostly recommend Queensland, in particular, Cairns or Brisbane. But most of my students apply for a Cambridge exam course either in March or September. For these, I advise them to study in Perth, Sydney or Melbourne.”

Heidi Süess, Castle’s English Institute, Switzerland



“Australia, particularly Sydney, became famous during the Olympic Games. Many young people wanted to come here because it is a beautiful city with friendly people. Students come here because they can enjoy all this along with part-time work rights. It is a dream destination for many people. In their spare time, students like to travel. Many of my students buy cars. Often, they take part in sports, like surfing, diving and other watersports. Others just like to enjoy staying in cities, partying and going to beaches. I recommend Sydney, definitely. It is the melting pot and destination of the majority of people coming to Australia. It is the biggest city in Australia, with a population of over four million. Sydney is good for students, because it has the biggest variety of schools and there is plenty of choice.”

Peter Kovac, G8M8 – Great Mate, Australia

“All our staff have studied [in Adelaide]. We know Australia very well. Adelaide has many advantages compared with other cities, such as lower living costs but better living quality, and lower tuition fees but high-quality language schools. People are very friendly and there are not many Chinese, so it offers a better English language learning environment. Overall, we recommend Adelaide, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, and in the future, we will add Perth, because these are the top five cities.”

Ron Tseng, Southern Hemisphere Overseas Study Centre, Taiwan