



# South Australia

South Australia is a less well known study destination when compared with some other Australian states, yet it offers a diverse range of educational, social and recreational opportunities, as **BETHAN NORRIS** discovers.

**D**espite covering an area of just under 100,000 square kilometres, South Australia is home to just 1.52 million people and most of the educational opportunities for international students are to be found in the state's capital city of Adelaide. Gaynor Wilson from Study Adelaide points out that while students enjoy the ease with which they can get around this compact city – no journey takes more than 20 minutes – the whole state provides an exciting and unusual playground.

“South Australia is everything you might imagine this huge continent to be: the state is larger than Thailand, Malaysia and Cambodia added together,” says Wilson. “It has 5,000 kilometres of coast and the interior is home to rolling hills, sheep stations, vineyards, gold mines, salt lakes, ancient mountain ranges and the mighty outback deserts.”

Adelaide is sandwiched between the coast and the Mount Lofty Ranges, which means that students don't have to travel far to find out what makes this state so special. The many beaches in the western suburbs are easily accessible by public transport, while nature parks and opportunities to experience the outback are also just a short journey away. “Students can go west to meet

from the Centre for English Language in the University of South Australia.

The area's Mediterranean climate is also an attraction for students and contributes to the relaxed Australian lifestyle enjoyed by Adelaide locals. Adelaide has been called “the world's most contented city”, according to Wilson, and has more restaurants and cafés per head than any other capital city in the world. And at Tafe South Australia, Nina Lucas confirms that sharing a meal with new friends is a popular pastime for their international students. “The Central Market with its China Town offers cheap food and wonderful dining experiences [and is] very popular with international students,” she says. “The beaches are also popular in summer and [nearby] hill areas with their Germanic cities, food and wine are historically interesting.”

Music and culture play an important part in the life of the city and Donnelly points out that Rundle Street East and Grundle Street are popular areas for students to go out in the evenings to explore the local nightlife. “Many of the old music pubs are great to visit, the Adelaide music scene still being vibrant,” she says. At certain times of the year, Adelaide's affinity with music is

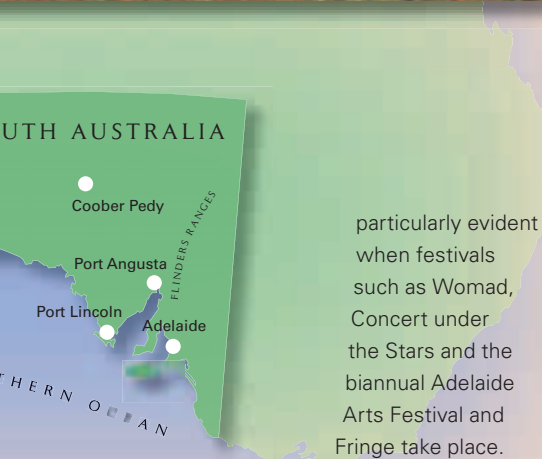
## **Palm House, Adelaide Botanic Garden**

Opened in 1877 and extensively restored in 1995, the garden's Palm House was imported from Bremen in Germany. Its Victorian glass design is possibly the only one of its kind





Emus in the Flinders Ranges, South Australia



particularly evident when festivals such as Womad, Concert under the Stars and the biannual Adelaide Arts Festival and Fringe take place.

Donnelly points out that the city is also host to a number of more unusual, and often free, events throughout the year. “[There are] street car rallies and races around the central city three or four times a year, the ‘Tour Downunder’ bicycle race [takes place] every January and the Olympic standard horse trials in the city parklands [are held] every November,” she says.

When it comes to exploring further afield, most language schools make a point of organising tours to show off their area’s most noticeable attractions. “We offer wildlife park excursions, Kangaroo Island excursions, eco-tours, golf and tennis, Barossa Valley winery tours and many more,” says Darren Donaldson from the English College of Adelaide. Kangaroo Island, situated off the Fleurieu Peninsula, is a popular destination, not least because

it is home to a number of species of wildlife unique to the island. The Kangaroo Island kangaroo is a sub-species of the Western Grey Kangaroo and is smaller, darker and has longer fur than the mainland species, while the Tammar Wallaby is extinct in southeastern Australia but abundant on the island. Visitors may also be able to see the many echidnas (spiny anteaters), goannas (monitor lizards), possums and koalas that live there.

Students studying at SA Adelaide Language Centre are offered a variety of excursions, according to Alison Schahinger, including trips to Victor Harbour to the southeast of Adelaide. The harbour is home to the South Australian whale centre, as well as being the gateway to Granite Island with its resident population of fairy penguins. Horse-drawn trams crossing a wooden causeway provide access to Granite Island – originally a whaling station but now a recreation park and listed on the state heritage register. Other popular marine residents in this area of the coast are Southern Right whales – so called because they were the ‘right’ whales for whaling ships to hunt – which gather in large numbers close to the shore between October and May each year.

For those wanting to explore Australia’s famous outback, an interesting place to visit is Coober Pedy, which is situated in the heart of the desert in the far north of the state. The town was developed around the opal mining industry, the history of which is charted in museums in the town, and it is possible to buy bargain price opals in local shops. The name Coober Pedy is Aboriginal and means “white man’s hole in the ground” in honour of the fact that most of the population live underground in dug-out homes due to the extreme temperatures that can reach 50 degrees in the summer months.

Due to its relatively small population, students studying in South Australia generally find it easy to fit into the local community. At Tafe South Australia, just nine per cent of the student body is from overseas, which makes it easier for international students to get to know the locals, according to Lucas. “Learning takes place side by side with locals and as confidence develops, friendships blossom,” she asserts. “Adelaide is a multicultural city that prides itself on cultural diversity and understanding. International students find themselves in demand.”

And the government actively encourages skilled migrants to settle in the state as students gaining educational qualifications in Adelaide get extra points towards their application for residency, points out Wilson. Donnelly observes that continued links with ex-students of the English language centre can be a valuable asset for current international students thinking about their future in Australia. “The network of past students who have moved on to further study is important for job connections,” she says. “Joining the university clubs and associations assists [students] in meeting a greater cross-section of the university population and in finding out about careers they have not considered or known about.”

## Agent viewpoint

“Most of our clients choose Adelaide rather than [other destinations in] South Australia and the reasons are as follows: It is a medium-sized city, has a lower cost of living, is close to nature and the wineries, is close to Melbourne and is a good location from which to visit Uluru (Ayers Rock) and Perth. [Our students enjoy] living with Australian families and visiting the nearby wineries and Kangaroo Island. [They also like] visiting the casinos and having a stroll in town.”

**Kayomi Ogawa, Oceania Koryu Centre, Japan**

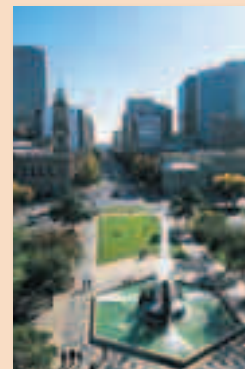
“South Australia has a socially safe and educational environment and modest cost of living, as well as quality education programmes from the primary to tertiary sectors. [Our students particu-

larly like] the South Australian hospitality, beautiful scenery and low cost of study and living.”

**Jong Taik Lee, EduAustralia, Korea**

“Adelaide provides an environment with quality education, less distraction and a smaller Chinese community where the students can learn better English and Australian culture while pursuing their study goal. Unlike other big cities in Australia, students enjoy living in Adelaide as it is relatively quiet and peaceful. They find the people, especially the teachers and the classmates, are helpful and friendly. Students enjoy studying in such an environment of encouragement and support.”

**Eliza Tse, iEducation & Training Group, Hong Kong**



### Victoria Square, Adelaide

In the heart of the city, Victoria Square provides a respite. Its fountain symbolises the three rivers which flow into Adelaide: the Murray, Torrens and Onkaparinga

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