

# Australian east coast adventures

Students who choose to study in any one of Australia's east coast states can look forward to a truly Australian outdoor adventure experience, as GILLIAN EVANS reports.

There are many reasons why students choose to study on the east coast of Australia. The vast area spanning the states of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland holds some of Australia's most treasured assets - tropical beaches with crystal clear waters, lush green rainforests, formidable mountain ranges, dense bush land and fast-moving rivers - not to mention the world famous Great Barrier Reef.

The east coast is also home to some of Australia's most well-known cities, including Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Cairns, as well as smaller rural cities and towns. The country's capital, Canberra, is situated in the Australian Capital Territory in New South Wales, while the island state of Tasmania lies off the coast of Victoria. It is no wonder that this area of Australia is so popular with tourists and language travellers alike. 'Students are attracted by a sense of fun and freedom that is distinctly Australian - the adventure to be found here, lots of space and [the fact that] you can be your-

self,' says Vincent Bastick of Shane Global Village (SGV), which has schools in Brisbane and Sydney.

The state capital of New South Wales, Sydney, is Australia's most famous city. 'Sydney is the largest and most cosmopolitan of Australia's cities,' says Bastick. 'There you will find Sydney Harbour Bridge, the unique architecture of the Opera House and some of the best city beaches in the world.' Shopping is also popular in the city. 'Fashion, souvenirs, jewellery, craft, music and a delicious range of international cuisines to sample can be found downtown,' details

Bastick, adding, 'Outside Sydney, New South Wales is home to brilliant national parks, the Blue Mountains, stunning beaches and some of the best vineyards the country has to offer.'

For a smaller urban experience of New South Wales, students can choose to study in Armidale,

which has a population of 22,000. 'People who come to Armidale to study at the Language Training Centre at the University of New England find it a breath of fresh air from the rushed pace, pollution and cost of living of the metropolitan area,' asserts Carolyn Wales at the centre.

Like many of Australia's smaller cities and towns, Armidale boasts all the recreational facilities of the larger urban areas. It has restaurants and cafés, pubs and lots of shops as well as music and theatre venues. According to Wales, it is also conveniently situated for exploring some of New South

Wales' natural beauty.

It is close to wonderful national parks and only a two-hour drive away from the popular tourist destination of Coffs Harbour and the beaches of the state's mid-north coast. 'These beaches enjoy a sub-tropical climate so students can go there at any time of the year and



#### Tasmanian Devil

These shy marsupials have a fierce reputation mainly due to their powerful jaws which can deliver a ferocious bite. Once common throughout Australia, they are now found only in Tasmania

## Agent viewpoint



'Students usually choose Sydney on the east coast because this destination is the most popular and well known.

Most of the images that we see are of the east coast, and particularly Sydney. Students usually find that Sydney is a good base to start travelling around Australia. They love the nightlife there and the day trips they can do in and around the city. The one request people are making more is for a work experience programme - this has become very popular. Students like to have... the day-to-day feeling of working in Australia and put

their English to the test in a 'real' environment.  
**Saïd Hadjami, Librarie Ellipse, Switzerland**



'I represent La Trobe University and recommend that students travel to Melbourne to experience a truly multicultural Australia. By studying on the east [coast], students [are able to] see widely varying parts of the Australian environment, and can [experience] the difference between the two major cities, Sydney and Melbourne.'

**Melanie Brock, LTU, Japan**



'Sydney, Brisbane and Cairns are the most popular destinations because they are big cities, known by Brazilian students who have already studied there and recommended [them]. Students like the climate, the friendly people, the safety, nice beaches and views. The schools we represent are all high quality schools. The only problem is that some of them are too popular with Brazilians, which means they have a high number of Brazilians in the school.'

**Karen Halley, Friends in the World, Brazil**



*Bushwalking in the outback is a popular pursuit (main picture)*

swim in the clear unpolluted water,' says Wales.

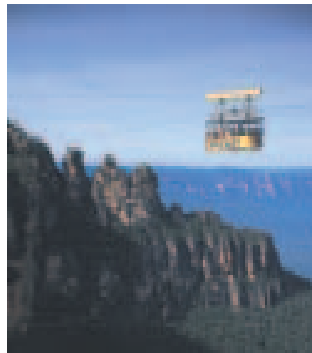
For a completely sub-tropical experience, Queensland is the state in which to study. 'Queensland [offers] sunshine, a clean green environment and an outdoor lifestyle,' says Margaret Lipscombe, Manager of International Programmes at



Cooloola Sunshine Institute of Tafe, situated an hour's drive from the state capital of Brisbane. Popular activities here include 'swimming, surfing, lazing on the beach [and a wide range of sports] - any outdoor activity really'.

Sandwiched between the beautiful Moreton Bay and spectacular mountain ranges, Brisbane 'really is an ideal location to study

and play', adds Bastick. Just a 10-minute walk from the city centre is the Southbank Parklands, a popular recreational area with both locals and tourists. 'Southbank has its very own lagoon and man-made beach, which attracts visitors all year round,' he says. 'An impressive range of cafés, restaurants, barbecue and picnic areas, as well as weekend art and craft markets keep Southbank



**Scenic skyway in the Blue Mountains, NSW**

The scenic skyway provides fabulous views of the Blue Mountains as well as the distinctive rock formation known as the three sisters

guests well entertained.' Elaine Hill at Queensland College of English in Brisbane adds, 'The same dollar [spend] buys you a better lifestyle in Brisbane than other parts of Australia.'

Known as the Gateway to the Great Barrier Reef, Cairns is another ideal location for language travellers seeking a mix of study and exciting leisure activities. As well as diving on the reef and the

other water sports available at any of the city's amazing beaches, students based in Cairns can enjoy the many lively spots in the city itself. 'Students comment that we have a great nightlife here in Cairns,' says Dolly Del Rosario at International House (IH) Queensland in the city. '[And] for working holiday students, they have greater opportunities for work, [because] Cairns is a major tourist destination.'

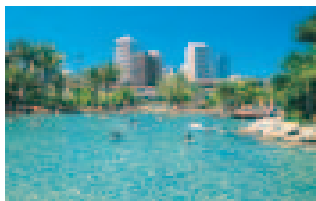


IH Queensland offers both academic preparation courses for students wanting to go on to higher education in Australia and study tour packages. One of its most adventurous courses is the Travelling Classroom. Del Rosario explains, '[This is] an amazing trip into the outback and the rainforest on a schedule that incorporates English language teaching with the wonders of the region. As the students travel, they learn the English they need to discuss and describe the region, putting the language into context in the most direct way possible.'

At Swinburne University of Technology in

Hawthorn, Victoria, English language students can live in the midst of an Australian university as the English language centre is situated on the campus. 'English language centre students are able to use all the university facilities and mix with

Australian students who are studying university or Tafe courses,' says Melissa Zabalegui, Marketing and Communications Officer, English Language and Learning Services (International) at the university.



**South Bank Parklands, Brisbane**  
Formerly the sight of Expo 88, this area of the city has been extensively developed and now includes a butterfly house, a rainforest sanctuary, a swimming lagoon, cafés and market stalls

Hawthorn itself is just a 10-minute train ride from Melbourne and its many cafés and restaurants. It is also ideally located for exploring other parts of Victoria, either independently or with the language centre. 'Teachers often organise hikes to various national parks and encour-

*'We took a group of students horse riding and some of the students had never been on a horse before. They were expecting to be led around an enclosed area, as is the case with learners sometimes. So, when we embarked on our two-hour adventure trail ride, it was to the sound of giggles and screams as the students cantered through the bush.'*

*Vincent Bastick, Shane Global Village, Brisbane and Sydney*

age students to participate,' says Zabalegui. 'This offers students the opportunity to see native Australian flora and fauna as well as experiencing further interaction with their teacher and classmates.'

There are also opportunities for language students to study within Victoria's wonderfully rich

natural environment. One-and-a-half hours away from Melbourne is the old gold-rush town of Bendigo and La Trobe University's language centre, which sits just on the edge of the One Tree Hill Regional Park. 'As well as enjoying all the facilities that a regional city of over 80,000 people offers, students can learn in classrooms that overlook a peaceful bush setting,' says Robyn Ballinger, Assistant Director of Studies at the centre. 'Native birds can often be heard from the classroom, and much to the delight of the students, a kangaroo even ventured just outside our computer room last year.'

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