



# NOBODY LIKES MOVING!

## MICRO FORTÉ STUDIOS AUSTRALIA'S RELOCATION PACKAGE\*

At Micro Forté Studios we will do everything we can to help make your relocation to Australia as easy and stress free as possible. We go to extreme lengths to look after our international developers, and have had a lot of experience over the past 20 years in making sure that the transition is as smooth as possible.



For any successful applicant, Micro Forté Studios will offer an attractive re-location package that will comprise of up to AUD \$10,000 upon receipt of expenses for items such as international airfares and relocation of personal possessions via a transport organisation. We may increase this figure for applicants with larger families.

Upon arrival in Australia you (and your partner/children) will be provided with up-to one (1) months stay in good quality and conveniently located accommodation so that you have time to find more permanent rental accommodation to suit your individual needs.



Micro Forté Studios will also provide assistance to you/your partner in finding suitable school and rental accommodation. This assistance is varied, but it might include contacting a variety of real-estate agents on your behalf prior to your arrival in Australia, contacting public or private schools in the local area for you, and general administrative research to ensure that prior to your move, as many logistics as possible are pre-arranged.

Within the first month of your arrival to Australia, a hire car will be made available for up-to 1 week (suitable dates and times to be determined by you). We also make your first month of employment as flexible as possible to allow you to get the finer details of your personal family arrangements in order. Micro Forté Studios staff will also make sure that you're clued in on all the local 'know how' and will show you around the city you're based in.

You'll also love our 'welcome pack' which includes stock fridge of food, essential items, including taking you (and your partner and children) out for a wonderful meal to introduce you to everyone. Many BBQs will follow so that you will get to know the wonderful people here at Micro Forté Studios!



Micro Forté Studios looks favourably to employees who are so captivated by what Australia has to offer, they might seek to obtain permanent residency in Australia. Should you be interested in seeking a permanent residency visa, the company will pay all reasonable legal costs and administrative expenses incurred by you (and your partner/children) to help gain a permanent residency visa.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Micro Forté Studios family.

*\*Notes: approval of any expenditure will need to be obtained from the company prior to expenditure.*



[www.microforte.com](http://www.microforte.com)

## ABOUT MICRO FORTÉ STUDIOS

Micro Forté Studios is a veteran game studio that was founded by passionate game developers in 1985. Our company, which is one of the oldest and most influential game companies in Australia, has studios in both Sydney and Canberra.

Over our long 20 year history in the games industry, we have been fortunate enough to work with some great talent, as well as work with some fantastic publishers including: US Gold, Panasonic/Ripcord, Electronic Arts, Interplay, THQ, Universal Interactive and Microsoft.



Toward the end of 1999 Micro Forté Studios saw an opportunity within the online games market for a definitive MMOG middleware solution. We turned our energies toward this and have dedicated the last few years building the BigWorld Technology platform for MMOG game development. We successfully completed this technology and spun it out as a separate middleware company named BigWorld Pty Ltd [www.bigworldtech.com](http://www.bigworldtech.com)

In turn, BigWorld was independently voted as "Australia's Coolest Company" in the Australian Anthill Cool Company Awards. Take a look for yourself.

[http://www.anthillonline.com/article\\_detail.php?id=141#winner](http://www.anthillonline.com/article_detail.php?id=141#winner)

After the global success of the BigWorld Technology, we at Micro Forté Studios are now focussing on our next chapter - making some very compelling titles with the cool tech we have spent years perfecting! With the benefits of BigWorld providing us with our technology needs, we are a unique developer who is in the fortunate position of being able to focus on game development titles in the rapidly growing frontier of the MMO and virtual world space, working with select publishing partners and innovators in this space.



We are a loyal group of individuals who choose to work together because we share a similar vision and our commitment to each other and our goals have enabled us to reach this unique position. We employ some of the best talent Australia has to offer, and we provide a fantastic game development culture with a strong working environment. It's our values that have allowed us to remain as a development company for over 20 years, something that very few game studios can boast about. And yes, some of our core staff have been with us for the entire 20 year period, a testament on how much we value people!

Map for Sydney studio: <http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&hl=en&geocode=&q=341+Glebe+Point+Road,+Glebe,+NSW&sll=-35.2395,149.148647&sspn=0.012408,0.025449&ie=UTF8&ll=-33.875137,151.185136&spn=0.006307,0.012724&z=16&iwloc=addr>

Map for Canberra studio: <http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&hl=en&geocode=&q=49+Phillip+Avenue,+Watson,+ACT&sll=-33.871692,151.180492&sspn=0.006307,0.012724&ie=UTF8&z=15&iwloc=addr>

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## INTRODUCTION

Micro Forté Studios hopes that this introduction to Australia will provide you with sufficient information to get an idea of what it would be like to work and live here. A lot of useful hints about the costs of living, accommodation and various other factors for moving overseas to Australia are included in this info pack. The website links will also help you obtain more knowledge about our precious country and the day-to-day procedures of living here. Happy Reading!

## HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA

Australia is an English-speaking, multicultural country with a diversity and richness developed from migrant people from across the world and the Aboriginal people who were the original inhabitants of Australia prior to European settlement in the 1780s. While early settlement in Australia was British and ties are kept with England, since the 1950s there has been a large intake of migrants with an increasing migration from South-East Asia.

Australia is nearly equal in size to China or the United States of America. The population of Australia is, however, relatively small with approximately 20+ million people living mostly around the coastal fringe of the country. Australia is very urbanised with Sydney and Melbourne comprising nearly half of the nation's total population.

### Australia's Population

The approximate Australian population is 21,350,020

To view a map of Australia visit  
Geo Science Australia

[http://www.ga.gov.au/image\\_cache/GA4073.jpg](http://www.ga.gov.au/image_cache/GA4073.jpg)



## AUSTRALIA'S TIME ZONES

There are three time zones in Australia. Both Micro Forté's Canberra and Sydney studio are on Australian Eastern Standard Time.

Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) is equal to Greenwich Mean Time plus 10 hours (GMT +10).

### DAYLIGHT SAVING

Daylight saving time is observed by **New South Wales**, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and the **Australian Capital Territory** from early to late October to the end of March. Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory do not observe daylight savings.

### Where daylight saving is being observed:

AEST becomes Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT), and clocks are advanced to GMT +11.

## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Public holidays are also designated on a state and territory basis with the exception of national public holidays.



### Public Holidays for the ACT (Canberra) and NSW (Sydney) include:

New Year's Day
Australia Day
Canberra Day (ACT only)
Good Friday
Easter Saturday
Easter Monday
Anzac Day
Queen's Birthday
Labour Day
Christmas Day
Boxing Day

## AUSTRALIA'S CLIMATE

Like most countries, we enjoy four seasons throughout the year – Spring (Sept to Nov), Summer (Dec to Feb), Autumn (Mar to May) and Winter (Jun to Aug).

Season	Description
Spring	Cool sunny days with glorious floral blossoms.
Summer	Warm to hot, plenty of sunshine.
Autumn	Thousands of trees turn gold and red, with cool nights and warm days.
Winter	Crisp and cool with occasional frosty mornings.



The chart below shows last years average minimum and maximum temperatures throughout summer and winter.

### 2004 – 2005 Average Minimum and Maximum Temperatures

Location	Mean Temperatures (°C)				Rain (mm)
	January		July		
	Max	Min	Max	Min	
Adelaide	28.5	16.6	14.9	7.5	553
AliceSprings	36.1	21.2	19.5	4.0	274
Brisbane	29.2	21.0	20.6	9.5	1189
Canberra	27.8	12.9	11.1	-0.2	631
Darwin	31.8	24.8	30.4	19.3	1666
Hobart	21.5	11.7	11.5	4.5	624
Melbourne	25.7	14.0	13.3	5.8	661
Perth	31.5	16.8	17.7	8.1	869
Sydney	26.3	18.5	16.9	6.7	1220

## MONEY MATTERS

Before your move to Australia, check that you complete all the financial, taxation and legal matters that affect you and your family. You may need to set up bank accounts that operate from both your old and new country.

If you move to Australia from an overseas country, it is advisable for you to contact one of the larger banks to discuss the documentation and other requirements necessary to open a bank account in Australia.

Some suggestions include:

- Commonwealth Bank Australia (CBA) [www.commonwealthbank.com.au](http://www.commonwealthbank.com.au)
- Australia and New Zealand Bank (ANZ) [www.anz.com.au](http://www.anz.com.au)
- Westpac Bank [www.westpac.com.au](http://www.westpac.com.au)
- National Australia Bank (NAB) [www.national.com.au](http://www.national.com.au)

Australia uses the Australian dollar (AUD), which is divided into 100 cents. The Australian currency is convertible into other major currencies. Like all other floating currencies, the exchange rate varies constantly. Therefore, before converting you should verify the Australian dollar's rate against your country's at the time of exchange. As a general guide, the exchange rate as of June 2008 was AUD1.00 to US\$0.95.

The most extensively used credit cards in Australia are Visa, MasterCard and Bank Card. American Express, Diners and other international credit cards are accepted by most businesses. The majority of businesses in Australia accept payment by credit cards. These businesses also accept debit cards, which are issued by your bank and are used to pay for purchases with money in your bank account, as opposed to on credit. This transaction is known as EFTPOS (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale). Throughout Australia there are numerous ATMs (Automatic Teller Machines) located at banks and shopping centres. These can be used to withdraw cash 24 hours a day, without having to enter a bank.

A Goods and Service Tax (GST) was introduced in Australia on July 1, 2000. It is a broad-based tax of 10 percent on most goods and services. There are some GST-free items – for example, basic food such as meat, fresh fruit and vegetables. Some pre-prepared or luxury foods and beverages include GST. Take-away food, restaurant meals and alcohol, for example, are subject to GST.

To find out more about the Australian Taxation System visit [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au).



## **COST OF LIVING IN AUSTRALIA**

Australia's cost of living is lower than that of Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, some parts of the United States, and the United Kingdom.

The average weekly expenditure per household (not individual persons) on food and non-alcoholic beverages in the Australian Capital Territory (Canberra) is AUD\$153.00.

The average weekly expenditure per household (not individual persons) on transport in the Australian Capital Territory (Canberra) is AUD\$139.00.

Exchange rates used in the table of cost comparisons below:

1 GBP = 1.75 USD

1 GBP = 1.46 EUR

### **Cost of living comparisons in £s – 2006**

#### **Selected cities worldwide (1 GBP = 1.46 EUR)**

**(NB purchases at medium-priced establishments)**

	Rent of a luxury two bedroom unfurnished apartment (per month)	Bus Or Subway Ride	Music CD	1 issue of international daily newspaper	1 cup of coffee, including service	Fast food hamburger meal
London	1700	2.00	11.99	1.10	1.90	4.50
Dublin	824	1.03	14.06	1.37	2.06	4.05
Paris	1303	0.96	11.65	1.37	1.51	4.12
Rome	926	0.69	14.58	1.37	1.51	3.91
Amsterdam	926	1.10	15.08	1.78	1.71	4.46
Berlin	720	1.44	12.34	1.44	1.71	3.26
Athens	721	0.55	13.03	1.23	2.88	4.97
Brussels	652	1.03	13.70	1.37	1.51	3.77
Madrid	892	0.75	13.72	1.71	1.58	4.18
Prague	754	0.41	14.44	1.20	2.17	2.89
Warsaw	754.	0.43	13.52	1.80	1.98	2.79
Zagreb	754	N.A.	13.60	N.A.	2.35	2.58
Tokyo	2352.	1.32	12.25	0.74	1.47	2.99
Beijing	1528	N.A.	12.08	2.49	2.42	1.46
Sydney	1104	1.06	11.03	1.63	1.49	2.74
New York	1998	1.14	10.77	0.93	2.26	3.43
Buenos Aires	571	0.15	6.88	2.60	0.84	1.58
Johannesburg	553	N.A.	17.01	2.21	1.29	1.84
Vancouver	804	1.13	10.61	1.88	1.63	2.79

*Source: Mercer Human Resource Consulting*

You can also use the cost of living calculator on the Australia migration web page to calculate the cost of living in Australia compared with your home country.

[http://www.australia-migration.com/page/Cost\\_of\\_Living\\_calculator/95](http://www.australia-migration.com/page/Cost_of_Living_calculator/95).

## INCOME TAX - WHAT YOU PAY IN AUSTRALIA

Tax is a highly complex issue and needs to be worked out on an individual basis. Income tax can be structured in various ways for employees in Australia. While it is possible to 'pay as you go' with tax, you still have to submit a tax return at the end of the financial year, which falls on 30 June. It is advisable to use the services of an accountant to do this.

If you start your employment as a salaried worker, visit an accountant to find the best tax set-up for you. There are two kinds of qualified accountant in Australia: the certified practising accountant or CPA, or chartered accountant. There is little difference between the two, but make sure your accountant has either qualification.

For basic information on tax rates, fringe benefits tax - which affects employment benefits like company cars and business expenses - superannuation and family tax benefits visit the Australian Tax Office website [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au) . If you will be paid a salary you can work out your weekly, fortnightly or monthly tax deductions in the tax calculation section of the website. Payroll tax is levied on employers and is based on wages paid or payable to employees. In most States, the base also includes employer superannuation contributions.

The amount of tax you pay also depends on your visa status. If you are a non-resident the following tax table will be relevant:

### Australian Tax Rates 2006-07\*

Taxable income	Tax on this income
\$0 - \$30,000	29c for each \$1
\$30,001 - \$75,000	\$8,700 plus 30c for each \$1 over \$30,000
\$75,001 - \$150,000	\$22,200 plus 40c for each \$1 over \$75,000
Over \$150,000	\$52,200 plus 45c for each \$1 over \$150,000

*\* a lower taxation rate may be applicable if an individual employees' circumstances meet the Australian residency tests for taxation purposes.*

Non-residents are not required to pay the Medicare levy.

Information for people new to the Australian Tax system can be viewed online at [http://www.ato.gov.au/individuals/pathway.asp?pc=001/002/031&mfp=001/002&mnu=1180#001\\_002\\_031](http://www.ato.gov.au/individuals/pathway.asp?pc=001/002/031&mfp=001/002&mnu=1180#001_002_031)

A simple tax calculator is also available to calculate the tax on your taxable income <http://calculators.ato.gov.au/scripts/asp/simpletaxcalc/main.asp>

## SUPERANNUATION

Superannuation is a way of saving for your retirement. The superannuation guarantee is a compulsory requirement that employers withhold 9% of an employees salary and deposit this into a complying superannuation fund. This is the responsibility of employers, not employees. The aim of the superannuation guarantee is to ensure as many Australians as possible enjoy the benefits of superannuation income in their retirement.

Your employer should generally make superannuation guarantee contributions for you to a complying superannuation fund or retirement savings account if:

- you are aged between 18 and 70, and
- you are paid AUS \$450 or more in a calendar month.

This applies for full-time, part-time and casual employees, including those who work under a contract principally for the labour of the person.



For the 2002-03 financial year and beyond, if you are an eligible employee, your employer should contribute a minimum of 9% (the charge percentage) of your earnings base to a complying superannuation fund or a retirement savings account. They should do this at least every quarter. This amount will usually be clearly set out in your employment contract.

Most employees are eligible to choose the superannuation fund for any superannuation guarantee contributions their employer makes for them. The Micro Forté Pty Limited group superannuation fund is MLC [www.mlc.com.au](http://www.mlc.com.au) and we have a superannuation adviser/consultant who can assist you with any advice that you may require (if you elect the company superannuation fund).

For more information refer to Superannuation guarantee – information for employees (NAT 1991) <http://www.ato.gov.au/content/downloads/nat1991.pdf> . To find out about choice of superannuation fund visit <http://www.australia.gov.au/Superannuation> .

### Accessing Your Superannuation

Generally, most of your superannuation must be held in a complying superannuation fund or retirement savings account until your earliest retirement age, which is at least 55 years old. This money is often called your preserved benefit. Some people may have unpreserved benefits which can be paid out before their earliest retirement age.

If you are a temporary resident you can claim any superannuation benefit you accumulated while working in Australia, as long as you visited on an eligible temporary resident visa (which has expired or been cancelled) and have permanently departed Australia.

As an eligible temporary resident, you can apply for your departing Australia superannuation payment (DASP). You can apply online at no cost, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## HEALTH

Australia has a wide range of high quality health care services and facilities including: emergency services, public and private hospitals, doctors (including general practitioners and specialists) surgeons, community health centres, dentists, serviced for people from non – English speaking backgrounds, therapeutic services and alternative medicine.

The Australian health system is widely regarded as being world-class, in terms of both its effectiveness and efficiency. The system is a mixture of public and private sector health service providers and a range of funding and regulatory mechanisms.



The Australian Government's funding includes three major national subsidy schemes, Medicare , the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and the 30% Private Health Insurance Rebate.

Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme cover all Australians and subsidise their payments for private medical services and for a high proportion of prescription medicines. Under Medicare, the Australian and State governments also jointly fund public hospital services so they are provided free of charge to people who choose to be treated as public patients. Australian Government funding of the 30% Rebate and other key incentives support people's choice to take up and retain private health insurance.

People make their contribution to the health care system through taxes and the Medicare levy based on their income, and through private financing such as private health insurance.

The aim of the national health care funding system is to give all Australians, regardless of their personal circumstances, access to health care at an affordable cost or at no cost, while allowing choice for individuals through substantial private sector involvement in delivery and financing.

The Australian Government has signed Reciprocal Health Care Agreements (RHCA) with the governments of the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, Norway, Malta and Italy which entitles you to limited subsidised health services for **medically necessary** treatment while visiting Australia. If you are a resident of the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Norway or the Netherlands you are covered for the duration of your approved visit to Australia. As a resident of one of these countries you are entitled to the following for any ill-health or injury requiring treatment while in Australia:

- free treatment as a public in-patient or outpatient in a public hospital
- subsidised medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
- Medicare benefits for out-of-hospital medical treatment provided by doctors through private surgeries and community health centres.

For further Information on public health care in Australia visit Medicare's Health Care for Visitors to Australia page

[http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/yourhealth/going\\_overseas/vtta.htm](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/yourhealth/going_overseas/vtta.htm).



Upon arrival in Australia, it is essential to acquire private health insurance. If you have private health insurance in the country you are moving from, you will be able to transfer this to an Australian health insurance company, such as MBF (Medical Benefits Fund), usually at the same level of coverage as in your home country. You must provide details relating to your policy along with a certificate proving your payments are up to date.

In the event of a medical emergency, contact your local hospital. If you do not know the number, then it's best to call an ambulance directly. To do so, dial '000' (within Australia), and you will be connected to an operator.

The New South Wales and ACT Ambulance Services are not a free service; it operates on a subscriber basis. Some health insurance policies offer ambulance coverage – so you should confirm with your health insurer that you are entitled to ambulance service. Or enquire with Private funds like HCF [www.hcf.com.au](http://www.hcf.com.au), NIB [www.nib.com.au](http://www.nib.com.au) and Manchester Unity [www.manchesterunity.com.au](http://www.manchesterunity.com.au).

A doctor's prescription is required for most medications. Some general medications, however, such as cold and flu, headache and allergy treatments, are available for over-the-counter purchase at a chemist (pharmacy) or leading supermarket. It is suggested to see your personal doctor before relocating to Australia to ensure that you are properly vaccinated. You may find that primary and pre-schools insist your children have been vaccinated against childhood illnesses such as polio, smallpox, measles and diphtheria. You will need to show a vaccination certificate and schools usually ask to see your child's birth certificate for proof of age.

If you are using any prescribed medications, speak with your doctor about your move and ask what your alternatives are in Australia. Remember that over-the-counter medication in your country might only be available by prescription in Australia.

Medicine is not free in Australia. You have to pay the full amount for prescription medicines. You may be able to claim back some of the cost of medicine from your private insurance or Medicare. You may also find some drugs are not permitted in Australia. If you rely on prescription drugs check with the manufacturer whether the drugs are available in Australia.



## **Other useful information:**

### **AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS**

For more information on Australian Customs Service and regulations visit [www.customs.gov.au](http://www.customs.gov.au).

### **AUSTRALIAN VISAS**

For information on Australian visas visit [www.dimia.gov.au](http://www.dimia.gov.au)

### **INTERNET DOMAIN NAMES**

Australian internet domain names end in .au. There are several second level domains within the .au domain and each second level domain has a purpose. Some of these include:

gov.au - for Commonwealth, State, Territory and local government bodies.

com.au & net.au - for commercial entities etc.

org.au - for charities and non-profit organisations.

edu.au - for educational institutions registered at Federal or State/Territory level, and

asn.au - for incorporated associations etc.

### **TELEPHONES**

Area codes differ in each State. Canberra and Sydney's area code is 02 if calling from within Australia or +61 2 from overseas.

The cost of a local call from a public phone is 50 cents. 1800 numbers are free call numbers when dialled from anywhere within Australia. 1300 numbers are costed at the local call rate when dialled from anywhere within Australia.

### **AUSTRALIAN ELECTRICITY**

The Australian domestic standard voltage is AC 240 volts, 50 cycle.

The standard plug is a three prong type.

### **TIPPING IN AUSTRALIA**

While appreciated, is not expected in Australia. If you have received excellent service, particularly in a restaurant, a tip is always welcome.



## **ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY (CANBERRA)**

The Micro Forté Canberra Studio is located in the quiet, leafy inner north suburb of WATSON. Only 10 minutes drive from the city and walking distance to cafes, bars and restaurants. Plenty of fresh air and wide open spaces to lounge in the sun during your lunch break!!!



### **POPULATION**

About 340,000 people live in Canberra.

### **LOCATION**

Canberra is located in the Australian Capital Territory, which is surrounded by New South Wales. The city is 150 kilometres inland and 571 metres above the Pacific Ocean.

Canberra is strategically located with the major cities of Sydney (300 kilometres) and Melbourne (650 kilometres), as well as beaches (200 kilometres) and snowfields (213 kilometres) in easy reach.

### **CANBERRA AT A GLIMPSE**

Located on the ancient lands of the Indigenous Ngunnawal people, Canberra's name is thought to mean 'meeting place', derived from the Aboriginal word Kamberra. European settlers first came in the 1830s, and the area was chosen for the federal capital in 1908. Canberra's special contrast of nature and urban living was planned in 1912 by master designer, Walter Burley Griffin, a Chicago architect who won an international design competition. Canberra boasts a safe and clean environment with a widely diverse multicultural community – it is one of the safest cities in the world to live in and the residents of Canberra enjoy a high standard of living and a superb lifestyle.

To view a map of Canberra or to find out where a street is in Canberra, visit [www.whereis.com.au](http://www.whereis.com.au)

### **TRANSPORT IN CANBERRA**

#### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Canberra's public bus service, ACTION Buses, covers the major sights and most suburbs. Pick up a bus map and timetable from bus interchanges in the city, Belconnen, Woden and Tuggeranong or visit [www.action.act.gov.au](http://www.action.act.gov.au).

#### **TAXI**

Canberra Cabs will take you anywhere you want to go. It is best to book a taxi by phone (13 22 27 when in Canberra) or wait for one at a taxi rank.

#### **CYCLING**

Canberra has a great network of on-road cycle lanes and off-road cycle paths, many running past national icons or through beautiful parks and bushland. Bikes can be hired from Mr Spokes Bike Hire in Acton. Buy a Cycleways map from a newsagent, book store or Canberra and Region Visitors Centre.

#### **AIR TRAVEL**

Generally, overseas travellers coming to Canberra will need to fly into an interstate airport and then transfer to a Canberra flight as there are few direct flights to Canberra from overseas.

## **RENTING IN CANBERRA**

Canberra housing is affordable and diverse, to view a comprehensive range of rental properties (through agents and private lessors) in Canberra, visit the All Homes website: <http://allhomes.com.au/c/ah?a=rentsr&i=1000&t=r>.

Suburbs in the Inner North are ideally located close to the Canberra Studio, these include: Ainslie, Braddon, Campbell, City, Dickson, Downer, Hackett, Lyneham, North Lyneham, O'Connor, Reid, Turner and Watson. However, it doesn't take longer than 30 minutes to travel to Watson from most suburbs, so don't feel restricted to these areas!

## **CANBERRA'S RETAIL SHOPPING HOURS**

Monday to Thursday - 9.00 am to 5.30 pm  
Friday - 9.00 am to 9.00 pm (late night shopping)  
Saturday - 9.00 am to 5.00 pm  
Sunday - 10.00 am to 4.00 pm  
Hours vary at smaller shopping centres and large department stores.

## **CANBERRA'S BANKING HOURS**

Monday to Thursday - 9.30 am to 4.00 pm  
Friday - 9.00 am to 4.00 pm  
Most branches have 24 hour automatic teller machines.



## **ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE IN CANBERRA**

Canberra is one of the world's few planned cities, a city in a park, with golden autumn leaves and glorious spring blooms. Surrounded by native bushland, Canberra is perfect for getting back to nature.

But hidden beneath the leafy surrounds is a thriving modern city with stylish restaurants, hip bars, boutique shopping, fun for the kids and a busy calendar of events and festivals.

The surrounding region offers more than 30 wineries, historic townships, beautiful coastlines and the famous Snowy Mountains.

Canberra is home to many national tourist attractions including: The Australian War Memorial, National Museum of Canberra, National Art Gallery, Questacon, The Royal Australian Mint, Parliament House and Old Parliament House.

Canberra is a city catering for an international community, and has the freshest produce available due to its proximity to regional communities. Canberra's shops and markets provide world-class food supplies.

For detailed information on accommodation, attractions, events, tours, food and entertainment in Canberra visit the Canberra Tourism Website: [www.visitcanberra.com.au](http://www.visitcanberra.com.au).

## **ABOUT SYDNEY**

The Micro Forté Sydney Studio is currently located in the suburb of Glebe, on the city-fringe. Glebe is well-known for its bohemian-chic crowd, cafes and numerous scatterings of parks.



### **POPULATION**

Approximately 4.2 million people live in Sydney.

### **LOCATION**

Sydney is in a coastal basin bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the east, the Blue Mountains to the west, the Hawkesbury River to the north and the Woronora Plateau to the south. Sydney lies on a submergent coastline, where the ocean level has risen to

flood deep river valleys (rias) carved in the sandstone. One of these drowned valleys, Port Jackson, better known as Sydney Harbour, is the largest natural harbour in the world. There are more than 70 harbour and ocean beaches, including the famous Bondi Beach, in the urban area.

### **SYDNEY AT A GLIMPSE**

Magnificently situated on one of the finest natural harbours in the world and bounded to the north and south by National parks and to the west by the beauty of the Blue Mountains, the City of Sydney offers a unique experience to all newcomers. At the heart of Australia's largest cosmopolitan city, you will experience Sydney's vibrant culture. Our city is well serviced by the public transport system and there is easy access to the spectacular harbour and beaches, beautiful botanical gardens and parks, museums, cinemas and theatres.

Sydney is the largest city in Australia. The multicultural nature of Australian society is magnified in Sydney, home to nearly four million people from all corners of the globe and a wide variety of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. This cosmopolitan city is full of life and you will experience Sydney's vibrant culture in its many cinemas, theatres, museums, galleries, restaurants and cafes. The city also has a range of spiritual centres for people to worship in according to their own tradition.

Sydney is a cosmopolitan city that abounds with an air of glamour and excitement. Located on the waterfront, the city is internationally recognized by the architectural distinctiveness of the Harbour Bridge and Opera House. Within the city center, a multicultural society makes for a diverse and interesting atmosphere. Besides a thriving business centre, Sydney also boasts a vibrant nightlife, fantastic weather, diverse shopping, world-class dining, unique sights - you'll never run out of things to do. In short, you'll find Sydney a great place to live.

To view a map of Sydney or to find out where a street is in Sydney, visit [www.whereis.com.au](http://www.whereis.com.au)

### **TRANSPORT IN SYDNEY**

#### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Sydney's trains and buses have a comprehensive network in all inner and outer suburbs.

For timetables and information on Sydney buses visit <http://www.sydneybuses.info/>

For timetables and information on Sydney trains visit <http://www.cityrail.info/>

### **TAXI**

There are several taxi services in Sydney. Taxis combined is Sydney's largest network of taxis and will take you anywhere you want to go. It is best to book a taxi by phone (133 300 when in Sydney) or wait for one at a taxi rank.

### **AIR TRAVEL**

Sydney has a world class international airport with direct flights to all major destinations.

### **RENTING IN SYDNEY**

Sydney provides a diverse range of accommodation, ranging from beautiful Victorian houses to modern city apartments located on the edge of the Sydney Harbour.

To view a comprehensive range of rental properties in Sydney visit [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au).

Glebe and surrounding suburbs are ideally located close to the Sydney Studio, these include: Annandale, Leichhardt, Newtown, Camperdown and Redfern.

### **SYDNEY'S RETAIL SHOPPING HOURS**

Monday to Wednesday 9am – 6pm  
Thursdays 9am – 9pm (late night shopping)  
Saturday 9am – 5pm  
Sunday 10am – 4pm

Hours vary at smaller shopping centres and large department stores.

For a detailed guide to shopping in Sydney visit:  
<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/sydney-shopping/>

### **SYDNEY'S BANKING HOURS**

Monday – Thursday 9:30am – 4pm.  
Friday 9:30am – 5pm.  
Weekends closed.  
Some smaller banks open on weekends.

### **ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE IN SYDNEY**

Sydney boasts many memorable sights to visit. From natural beauty of the Blue Mountains, to the stunning architecture of the Sydney Harbour Bridge – whatever your interests are, Sydney has something to offer.

Although most Australians are known for their love of sports and outdoor activities, there are many indoor, less-active activities to participate in. Festival events, jazz concerts, street theatre, music, ballet, opera, the Sydney Festival and more are held throughout the year. When it comes to eating out, Sydney has is an extraordinary multicultural menu. Sydney contains hundreds of excellent restaurants, ranging from fast-food outlets, to seafood and fine cuisine.

For detailed information on accommodation, attractions, events, tours, food and entertainment in Sydney visit the NSW Tourism Website: <http://www.sydneyaustralia.com/>.

A good guide to the huge variety of restaurants is:  
<http://www.sydneyeats.net.au/>

A great variety of pubs and clubs are also available:  
<http://www.sydneypubguide.net/>



## EDUCATION

The Australian school year runs from January to December, with four school terms. The longest holiday is over the Christmas period (the Australian summer). Most educational institutions close for at least six weeks over the Christmas holidays. There are three other two-week school holidays during the year, in April (Easter), July and October.



According to UNESCO figures, Australia has one of the highest ratios of enrolment in primary and secondary education in the world; on a par with the United Kingdom.

Australia and the UK have among the highest primary and secondary school enrolments in the world and education in Australia is cheaper than in the UK, US and Japan.

Education in NSW and the ACT can start at a kindergarten or pre-school - the majority of pre-schools are privately run. Children from two to five years can attend these schools. By law, children have to start school by their 6th Birthday. Students can legally leave school at age 15, however students remain at school if they want to take their School Certificate in year 10 or Higher School Certificate in year 12.

Most suburbs will have a long day-care centre where babies and under-fives can stay from around 7 am to 6 pm, catering for working parents. Day care centres and pre-schools must be council approved and local councils can provide lists of those in your area.

The school system in Australia is divided into two sectors. There is the government-run or "free" education system, and the independent or "fee-paying" education system. The public system is generally of a high standard and children are guaranteed a place at the local school in the area they are living. In comparison to the government-run schools, independent schools may have superior resources, such as larger grounds and an emphasis on sports or other extracurricular activities. Many of the independent schools are church affiliated, though they accept children of all faiths. Catholic, Christian and non-denominational schools are the three types of independent schools.

Private schools are competitively priced when compared to schools in Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong. An William M. Mercer survey of day school tuition fees charged by secondary schools where expatriate professional and management staff send their children found that Sydney schools were less than one-third the cost of equivalent London and Tokyo schools, and more than 60% cheaper than New York schools. Many private schools are affiliated with church organisations. Boarding facilities are provided within many top schools and fees range from around AUD\$2,000 to over AUD\$20,000 a year.

Most students attending Public Schools who hold temporary visas are required to pay the Temporary Visa Holders Education Fee. Individual exemptions of fees are considered on a case by case basis.

## UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

For information on the entry requirements for universities and colleges visit the Universities Admissions Centre (NSW & ACT) website <http://www.uac.edu.au/>.

A full list of Australia's universities and colleges is available from The Good Guides website <http://www.thegoodguides.com.au/>. The site lists courses and campuses and rates their facilities. It also has sections on courses for international students and corporate executives.

School terms in Australia are designated on a state and territory basis. The tables below show school terms for 2007. Term dates for tertiary schools vary depending on the institution.



**ACT (CANBERRA) 2008 SCHOOL TERMS**

	<i>Term Dates</i>	<i>Holidays</i>
Term 1	1 February - 11 April	12 April - 27 April
Term 2	28 April - 4 July	5 July - 20 July
Term 3	21 July - 26 September	27 September - 12 October
Term 4	13 October - 19 December	20 December -

**NSW (SYDNEY) 2008 SCHOOL TERMS**

	<i>Term Dates</i>	<i>Holidays</i>
Term 1	29 January - 11 April	12 April - 27 April
Term 2	28 April - 4 July	5 July - 20 July
Term 3	21 July - 26 September	27 September - 12 October
Term 4	13 October - 19 December	20 December -

*\* the first day of terms 1-3 is a school development day*

**SENDING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IN THE ACT (CANBERRA)**

Canberra’s education system and institutions produce the most highly educated population and workforce in the country, and they attract increasing numbers of students from around the world. Schooling in the ACT is available through the public or private school systems and Canberra has the best public school system in Australia. It begins with a kindergarten (K) year, at the age of five, and then continues for a further 12 years of schooling. Primary school consists of K to 6, and secondary school is from years 7 to 10. Years 11 and 12 are conducted at senior secondary colleges. Each college develops its own range of courses. These are accredited by the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies. The Board also ensures that courses leading to tertiary entrance qualifications will meet the requirements of tertiary institutions throughout Australia.

No subjects are compulsory in secondary colleges. However, students are encouraged to choose courses from all areas of the curriculum to develop a comprehensive range of knowledge and skills.

Visit the ACT Department of Education and training for a list of Government and Private Schools [http://www.det.act.gov.au/school\\_education/directory\\_of\\_schools](http://www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/directory_of_schools)

The current Temporary Visa Holders Education Fees for Public Canberra Schools are:

- Years K-6 AUD\$ 9,000
- Years 7-10 AUD\$12,000
- Years 11-12 AUD\$13,500
- Secondary Introductory English Centre AUD\$13,500
- Primary Introductory English Centre AUDA\$9,500

However the ACT Department of Education and Training has provision to exempt the children of “specialist” employees. These employees are identified using advice provided by BusinessACT and the Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. Currently specialist IT workers are included in the exempt category. Micro Forté Studios will assist you with applying for exemption.

## **SENDING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IN SYDNEY**

The schooling system in Sydney is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary studies. Primary education in New South Wales is open to any child whose fifth birthday falls on or before July 31 in the year of enrolment. Prior to entering primary school, the majority of children attend a pre-school. Pre-school attendance is not a government requirement, but it can help prepare children for primary school.

Primary school years commence at kindergarten, when the child first enters school, and goes through until Year Six. Primary school lasts for seven years, and children normally finish Year Six when they are 11 or 12 years of age.

After primary school, children attend secondary school, commonly referred to as High School. Secondary education lasts for a period of six years, encompassing years Seven through Twelve. At the end of the Year Ten, the Board of Studies awards students with a School Certificate.

Great emphasis is placed on the final exams of the two last years of secondary school. On completion of Year Twelve, students are awarded a High School Certificate (HSC) and are given a University Admission Index (UAI) within the state, which is required for university acceptance.

Visit the NSW Department of Education and Training website to use their school locator to find a public/government school <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/schoolfind/locator/> or to visit a directory of private schools visit <http://www.isd.com.au/>.

The current Temporary Visa Holders Education Fees for Public Sydney Schools are:

Primary School Years K-6 \$4,500  
Junior High school Years 7-10 \$4,500  
Senior High School Years 11 & 12 \$5,500  
Plus Non-refundable administration fee \$110

