





FEATURE



Making the Big Move to Western Australia



MY VIEW

According to Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures, people are still flocking to Western Australia in big numbers, drawn by the location's enviable reputation as Australia's most prosperous state.

In their September 2012 report, the ABS says that more than 80,000 people made the big move to WA - a record increase of 3.4 per cent.

With the official population of Australia now sitting at around 23 million, an increase of 382,500 since September 2011, Australia's overseas migration accounted for 228,000 - 60% of that growth - the highest recorded in almost five years.

WA's population reached 2.45 million in 2012, experiencing its biggest growth since the 70s.

Our state had the country's highest annual level of net overseas migration, with a massive 50,600 people arriving in WA in 2012, supplemented by an additional 11,100 net interstate arrivals in the same year.

That's 60,000-plus new residents who, in the case of the new immigrants, have to be assimilated into our various communities, housed and shown the ropes to a new and, in most instances, extremely different social and cultural norms.

For these immigrants it must be a complete life-changing experience.

(I know and understand because we have been through this very same process). Apart from fitting in to a whole new way of life there is accommodation to find, endless government forms to fill in, tax file numbers to acquire, jobs to find and, in most cases, families to care for.



Even for those arriving from interstate there are changes and adjustments that need to be made: decisions on where children are to go to school, what's the best or the right suburb to fit my social and economic aspirations, voter roles to change, driver's licences to transfer and myriad other decisions to make and actions to take.

It can be a bit daunting for all concerned and it is a comfort if there is someone or something you can turn to for assistance and clarification or to just provide support and reassurance.

As mentioned, my family went through this very process when we emigrated to WA from our native South Africa more than a decade ago.

We learned the hard way. We made quite a few mistakes, didn't do the homework we should have in advance and so, probably cost ourselves considerable amounts of time and money that could have been saved if we'd had access to someone who could open the doors and lead us through the process of assimilation, in a more orderly and economical manner.

Although this chapter doesn't pretend to provide all the answers it should give new arrivals to this great state a head start and point them in the right direction to obtain friendly help and advice, acquire contact details for government departments and community resources and be given a brief introduction to the sort of lifestyle and location they have chosen as their new home.

In writing this chapter, I have drawn on my own experiences and issues that we faced as 'New Australians' freshly exposed to the Australian way of life and I trust that the insights and advice outlined in the following pages will help make the process of settling into your new home that little bit easier.

Our State

Sitting to the west of the Australian continent, Western Australia is the country's biggest and most prosperous state, dwarfing the other five states that make up the Commonwealth of Australia, as it accounts for more than half of our island nation's total area.

A vast, remote land of stark contrasts, WA has generated its riches from the valuable mineral resources located beneath her rough, red-earthed exterior. Famous for iron ore, natural gas and other much sought after minerals, the state's closest neighbours are Indonesia and South East Asia, giving it a much different focus and orientation to our Eastern states neighbours.

Perth is the state's capital, a river-based coastal city in the state's upper South West, and key regional focus of WA. But there are eight other widely varying geographical and climatic regions outside the Perth metropolitan area that are as diverse as they are different, ranging from arid interiors in the centre to steamy tropical climes in the north and northwest and a more temperate locale in the southwest.

The regions, including Perth & Surrounds, are:

The Southwest

This is probably the best known tourist destination in the state and for very good reasons! The largest regional population, it boasts around 140-150,000 people, swelling hugely in summer months with the influx of tourists who journey to the area to visit the wineries, surf beaches and B&B's around the iconic Margaret River area.

Also known for gold and coal mining and agriculture it has a rich, verdant geography of rolling hills and stands of native forest. Major locations include Bunbury, Busselton, Collie & Boddington (a mining centre), Bridgetown and Bunker Bay.

The Great Southern Region

Further south from Margaret River and around towards the Great Australian Bite, is another tourist attraction – the Great Southern Region. It takes in Albany (known for its pioneering whaling industry founded just after the arrival of the British settlers in 1829 and only closing down as recently as 1978), Katanning and beautiful Bremer Bay. Agriculture is the major contributor to this 60,000 plus economy, ably supported by a burgeoning unspoilt tourism industry that takes advantage of its spectacular unspoilt beaches and bushland.

The Goldfields/Esperance Region

Just under 60,000 people make up this historical region famous for Kalgoorlie and its gold rush days of the 1850s. Located in the southeast region of the state this area is known for its mining and tourism.

The Wheatbelt

Directly to the north and east of Perth, this is a beautiful region of WA known, as its name implies, for its agriculture land and rich history.

You'll see fields of wheat as far as the eye can stretch and yellow patches of canola flowers and, in Spring, the proliferation of native wildflowers is a big tourist drawcard.



Starting about 100km from Perth with the Northam area (York – a town in the vicinity is credited with being the first inland town in WA. It was a stopping off point for diggers on their way to the goldfields of Kalgoorlie) it stretches to places like Merredin, Narrogin and Moora, supporting a population of around 75,000 people.

The Midwest (also known as The Gold Coast)

This region is very sparsely populated and is situated on the west coast of the state, extending about 200 km north and south of its administrative centre and hub of Geraldton, it also reaches more than 800 km inland to Wiluna in the Gibson Desert.

With a total area of over 470,00 sq.km, and a permanent population of about 52,000 people, more than half of those in Geraldton, the region is an important hub for the tourism industry and is also has the highest value fishing industry in Western Australia.

The economy of the Mid West region varies depending on the geography and climate. High annual rainfall, along

the coast, of 400-500 mm allows for intensive agriculture. Further inland, as annual rainfall decreases (to less than 250 mm), the landscape becomes drier and harsher and the economy of this area is dominated by mining of gold, nickel and other mineral resources.

Gascoyne

Located in the north west of Western Australia, the Gascoyne region consists of the local government areas of Carnarvon, Exmouth, Shark Bay and Upper Gascoyne, and extends inland about 500 km, covering an area of 138,000 km² (including offshore islands).

The Gascoyne has the lowest population (approx 145,000) and lowest population density of any region of the state.

With a moderate, arid tropical climate, the region is generally warm all year round.

The region receives about 320 days of sunshine per year, so rainfall is low and variable, averaging just 200 mm (8 in), most of which falls as a result of cyclonic activity.



Horticulture is the major industry - bananas, tomatoes, grapefruit, mangos, table grapes and vegetables are grown along the Gascoyne River. Fishing is also a major industry with prawn, scallop, crab and wet line fishing operations based in Carnarvon and Exmouth.

In the mining sector, salt and gypsum are mined at Lake McLeod north of Carnarvon. Tourism is also an important industry, due to the warm dry climate and the long coastline, which includes the Ningaloo Reef and Shark Bay World Heritage site.

The pastoral industry, no longer a major contributor to the economy, takes up more than 80% of the total region.

The Peel Region

The Peel region is located on the west coast about 75 km south of Perth and consists of the City of Mandurah, shires of Boddington Murray, Serpentine-Jarrahdale and Waroona.

Spread over more than 6,500 sq.km it has a population of about 88,000 people (two thirds of those reside in Mandurah).

Mining and mineral processing (aluminium, bauxite, gold) and there is some agriculture and an equine industry.

The Jarrahdale timber mill, established in 1872, and at one stage, the state's largest timber operation has declined in recent years, but the establishment of alumina refineries at Pinjarra and Wagerup and the gold mines at Boddington have helped the local economy.

The Pilbara

A large, dry, sparsely populated region in the north of WA, The Pilbara is known for its Aboriginal people and their ancient art, landscapes, red earth and its vast mineral deposits, in particular iron ore.

With an estimated population of around 50,000, this region covers an area of more than half a million square kilometres and includes some of Earth's oldest rock formations, landscapes of coastal plains and mountain ranges with cliffs and gorges. The major centres in the region are Port Hedland, Karratha and Newman.

The area is also famous for its huge petroleum and natural gas reserves and iron ore deposits, which make significant contributions to the West Australian





economy. Other than mining, pastoral activities, fishing and tourism are the main industries.

The Kimberley

Situated in the top northern part of the state, The Kimberley has the Indian Ocean on its west, Timor Sea to the north and to the south the Great Sandy and Tanami Deserts. Eastward it is bordered by the Northern Territory. It's 420,000 plus sq.km area makes it three times the size of England and twice the size of the state of Victoria.

With a tropical monsoon climate, where the region receives 90% of its average rainfall during the wet season from November to April, the Kimberley is one of the hottest parts of Australia, with average temperatures rising regularly into the 40 degree Celsius range and a mean average temperature almost always above 30 degree C.

The town of Broome is known for its tourism and its pearling industry. One third of the world's annual production of diamonds is mined at the Argyle and Ellendale diamond mines in the region and oil and gas reserves exist on and

offshore. Zinc, nickel and lead are also mined here.

Traditionally, the economy depended on pastoral leases but more recently agriculture has featured in the Ord River Irrigation area near Kununurra. There are also fruit growers in Broome and other areas in the West Kimberley. Beef cattle are also reared here and exported live to Asia.

There are a number of helpful websites that will supply you with detailed information about relocation and settlement in the regions outside Perth as well as government sites that can provide input on infrastructure, services and facilities available in these areas.

In this chapter we will concentrate our efforts on living in Perth and its surrounds.

Perth

Perth is a rapidly growing and expanding city built around the picturesque Swan River. With a population fast approaching 2 million (in 2012) Perth is much smaller than her larger eastern state counterparts of Melbourne and Sydney but is, nevertheless, a bustling metropolis that,



despite its seemingly remote location, thousands of miles away from the East coast, makes a major contribution to the Australian economy.

Perth is known for its beautiful beaches and outdoor lifestyle. The city and suburbs sprawl both north and southward along the coast looking out over the Indian Ocean, also spreading inland to the east.

Perth can be broken down into five main areas:

1. Inner Perth – including City, Inner North, Inner South, Inner South West, Inner East and Inner West
2. North Perth – including Northern Perth and Outer North
3. South Perth – including Outer South, Outer South West and Fremantle
4. East Perth – including Outer East
5. West Perth – including Western Perth

Home prices in these areas can vary greatly depending on their location and

‘desirability’. For example, southern beachside suburbs like Scarborough, Cottesloe, Brighton Beach, Floreat and Coogee (past Fremantle) and the riverside suburbs of South Perth, Nedlands, Applecross, Dalkeith and the iconic Peppermint Grove with its famous ‘Millionaire’s Row’ attract the higher end buyers.

But there are many affordable and attractive options in the middle to lower price range in both the north and south as well as eastward as you move inland a little further.

In the south you’ll find plenty of interest in areas like Victoria Park, Cannington, Thornlie, Canning Vale and Armadale. While to the north you’ll find places like Marmion, Karrinyup, Mirrabooka, Hilarys, Guildford, Burns Beach are all popular and then in the north east moving out from the city there is Dianella, Doubleview, Innaloo, Balcatta, Tuart Hill, Mirabooka, Malaga, Morley, Midland, Beechboro and the picturesque Swan Valley.

All these suburbs benefit from Western Australia’s greatest asset – space – plenty of it. From Gosnells to Guilford you’ll



find suburbs dotted with little green oases of space ... parks, playgrounds, playing fields, all shaded by majestic native gums and a fantastic, colourful array of flora.

There's a little piece of Perth that is out there with your name on it as a new arrival and the best person to show you that is a local real estate agent, whether you want to buy or rent.

They can tell you about price range, size, proximity to public transport. We have an extensive government-owned and operated rail and bus network, servicing the entire Perth metro area, and even the odd ferry service across the river to South Perth that departs from right under the city's landmark Bell Tower.

What I did when we arrived was to carefully study a map of the Perth area, identify schools, shopping centres and transport hubs, then set out to do a bit of exploring. And, who amongst us, doesn't like to see themselves as a bit of an 'explorer'? It's an exciting and revealing undertaking for a new arrival and quite an eye-opening experience.

Settling-In In Perth

Unfortunately, it is a fact of life that we have to live within a bureaucracy. Forms, applications, red tape and queues, the bane of all our lives, but an unavoidable and necessary evil for us all.

Here is some (hopefully) helpful advice on where to go and who to contact as part of the process of settling in to life in Perth. These are the mundane 'musts' of relocating but it is amazing what you can now do online – saving travel time, annoying queues and, getting lost as you try to find your way around a new city.



A Navman or GPS helps, but getting lost is still an occupational hazard for a new arrival. Fortunately, Perth is a pretty easy place to get around in, if a little spread out.

Arrival

Arriving in a new country or moving from interstate can be a bit daunting if you have no friends or family on the ground to meet you and all you have are a couple of suitcases and a whole lot of unanswered questions and queries about the new life on which you are embarking.

In my case, we were fortunate to have family from South Africa already living here in WA, but you're not alone. The Western Australian government and the Australian people are a pretty helpful lot and go out of their way to make new arrivals comfortable.

Just expanding further on the point about not knowing anyone, the best advice I can impart to prospective migrants is to start networking before you move to Western Australia by joining online forums or networking websites. You can easily find people online with similar interests and/or ethnicity and arrange to meet up when you first arrive in Western Australia.

Some examples to google:

Expat Blog – offers a blog on people moving to WA:

- www.expat-blog.com

Expat Forum– join the forum for expats making the move to WA:

- www.expatforum.com

Perth Exchange– a link in to make friends online or when you arrive:

- www.perthexchange.com.au

and, if you want to find out more and compare relevant statistics for Australia with your country, visit:

- www.nationmaster.com

For the time being I will concentrate on new arrivals from overseas. Some of the information in this chapter though will also be helpful and applicable to interstate arrivals who, in a lot of cases, see the long trek across the Nullarbor as akin to arriving in a new ‘country’ anyway by sheer dint of the incredible distance and isolation of Western Australia from her eastern neighbours!

Accommodation

Let’s assume you will have obtained all the necessary approvals and paperwork to live and work in Australia, so on arrival, unless you have pre-booked accommodation before leaving you will need somewhere to stay temporarily.

There are hundreds of short-term accommodation options around Perth and suburbs that includes hotels, motels, serviced and self-contained apartments.

Depending on your circumstances there is a price range to suit every level. State government Tourism information centres are located at Perth airport and in the city centre. They are a good source of short-term accommodation options.

Making new friends and contacts is a pretty easy task here in WA because we are a friendly (and inquisitive) lot, so don’t be surprised if total strangers engage you in conversation out of the blue. Part of the excitement of a new country and a new environment is making new friends and acquaintances. So you won’t feel alone for long!

Banking/Finance

As the song from the popular movie Cabaret says ‘Money makes the world go around’ and you will need access to it pretty quickly after you arrive.

Australia has a strong banking and financial system as was evidenced during the Global Financial Crisis. Australia’s ‘Big 4’ banks are well represented in Australia – ANZ, Commonwealth, NAB and Westpac – and have hundreds of branches dotted around Perth and surrounding suburbs.



There are also a number of smaller banks and financial institutions from which you can make your selection, including WA's own Bankwest and P&N Bank. All these institutions have comprehensive online websites that provide relevant information.

All offer the usual range of services and credit facilities, access to ATMs and loan portfolios. It's a good idea to establish a relationship with a bank after you have shopped around, as this relationship will gradually extend to cover things like vehicle and home loans, credit cards and future investments, as you settle into life in WA.

Financial institutions are compelled by law to withhold tax on interest earned from your savings if you do not supply a relevant Tax File Number (TFN) when you open your account, **so applying to the Australian Tax Office (ATO) for a TFN should be one of your first priorities.** (The mechanics of this are covered in the 'Government' section later)

When you go to open a bank account, make sure you take several forms of identification with you. When you open an account within the first 6 weeks of arrival in Australia, a passport and/or your travel documentation will suffice as acceptable ID.

In order to open an account you will need to meet a points system criteria to verify you are who you say you are.

You must provide at least one PRIMARY DOCUMENT – a birth certificate, citizenship certificate, a passport or international travel document – as part of the ID qualification process and to gain the majority of your 'points'.

The balance of the required '100 points of ID' can come from a current, valid driver's licence, Medicare card, home utilities account (electricity, gas etc), credit card, vehicle registration papers etc.

As most new arrivals will not have many of these, a written reference from a financial institution where you have held an account for at least twelve months, plus your primary document, will satisfy the balance requirement.

Cost of Living/Lifestyle

Australia, and Western Australia in particular, is known internationally for its affordability and relaxed lifestyle. Outdoor and beach-oriented, Perth's population is blessed with dry sunny weather most of the year round, a healthy growing economy driven by its mineral-rich resources, good education choices, employment and career opportunities, a stable democratic system of government and a clean, safe and wholesome environment in which to raise a family.

Perth sits behind Sydney and Melbourne but above Brisbane, Adelaide and Hobart in terms of affordable international cost of living rankings.

A guaranteed minimum adult wage and a huge demand for employees make WA's

lifestyle the envy of not only Australia but also many developed countries around the world.

Economy

A 10% GST (goods and services tax) is levied on most goods and services transactions. GST is levied on most transactions in the production process, but is refunded to all parties in the chain of production other than the final consumer.

Home ownership by 30 is not uncommon with thousands of new homes being built each year as the WA's population continues to grow exponentially year on year.

However, Perth and WA still experience and are affected by worldwide hikes in energy costs. At the time of printing fuel sat around \$1.50 a litre, gas and electricity costs were quite high but Australia in general still continues to enjoy a strong retail shopping environment with food and grocery essentials prices kept at manageable levels due to a highly competitive marketing from supermarket chains.

Motor vehicles and electrical goods too are very competitively priced despite a strong Australian dollar.

In Australia, citizens qualify for a means-tested pension at 65 (currently) and government/ employer subsidised superannuation is a compulsory component of everyone's employment remuneration package.

Driving and Transport

The road network in Perth and throughout WA is well designed and maintained but with the unexpected and ongoing migration to WA from overseas and interstate, the strain is starting to show with the emergence of peak-hour traffic logjams on major arterial roads in and out of the city.

While Perth doesn't have as many freeways as our interstate cousins, the positive side is that there are no toll roads or bridges in our state.

Road Rules & Laws

We drive on the left hand side of the road in Australia and all vehicles are right hand drive.

In WA the legal alcohol level at which you can drive is below 0.05%. There are mandatory penalties that include immediate suspensions and fines for any driver who tests over that limit and the police force conduct regular random breath test stations (via static check sites known locally as 'Booze Buses') and via police in vehicles.

Some of our state's traffic laws differ from those in other states of Australia so it is wise to familiarise yourself with these before getting behind the wheel (visit



www.transport.wa.gov.au/licensing for a copy of the Drive Safe handbook and details on how to go about obtaining a valid WA driver's licence. WA Road Rules can also be obtained from the Office of Road Safety.

Current interstate and overseas driver's licences are recognised and can be transferred. Check with the WA Department of Transport, there are offices throughout the metropolitan area. A written multiple-choice examination is involved as well as an eye test. To pass the test you must score 24 correct answers out of 30. A driving test is not normally required.

Every driver of a vehicle in WA must possess a valid current driver's licence. New drivers need to go through a 'P' plate probationary process and display different coloured 'P' plates that depict levels of experience.

Tests are booked and conducted through the Department of Transport also and include both theory and practical aspects. Practice learner's tests can be downloaded from the Department of Planning & Infrastructure website (the department under which Transport falls) at www.dpi.wa.gov.au/licensing.

The licence transfer application fee currently sits at \$36.20 while the cost of a driver's licence depends on the licence class and renewal period. The current annual fee for a standard Class C licence (standard motor vehicle) is \$36.60/year with a five-year option available at \$116.



Public Transport

(Buses, trains, taxis, airports & ferries)

Due to its size and spread, Perth does not have a truly comprehensive public transport system that services the needs of all residents.

The Perth central business district, including parts of East & West Perth and Northbridge, is serviced by free, convenient 'CAT' (Central Area Transit System) buses. There are currently four bus routes for Perth, two in Fremantle (Perth's major sea port 23km south-west of the city) and three in Joondalup (a major northern city suburb). Also included is the Rockingham City Centre Transit System, which connects this southern city's train station, CBD and foreshore. Rockingham is located 53km from Perth past Fremantle on the south-western coast.

An extensive bus network covers the suburbs of Perth and is supported by an extensive electrified overhead wire rail network of modern, air-conditioned carriages that has four lines radiating out from Perth city with a fifth line joining a little outside the city.



The western line has 15 stops to Fremantle. The northern line 8 stops to Clarkson also on the coast. The north-eastern line 13 stops to Midland and the south-eastern line to Armadale has 19 stops with the new southern suburban spike off the Armadale line having 10 stops along it to Thornlie.

A train line also runs down to Mandurah in the south as part of a regional network through to Bunbury in the south-west of the state.

Tickets for train travel are inexpensive and are dispensed automatically from train stations with prepaid multi-ride ticketing also available through newsagents and stores. Currently the fee for a single journey ranges from \$1.50 over 1 zone to \$9.30 over 9 zones. Discount options are available for multiple smart-rider fare purchases with students, pensioners and senior citizens able to qualify for heavily discounted and free travel during certain periods.

Taxis are in short supply unfortunately in Perth but they are available throughout the metropolitan area and within the city. There are several major cab companies servicing Perth. All taxis are metered and prices regulated.

Currently the standard flagfall is \$4.05 and \$1.60/km with different tariffs for different times of the day and public holidays. There are also surcharges and a call out fee of \$1.50 if you ring and book a taxi. All taxis are clean and modern and are checked and regulated.

A comfortable, regular ferry operates daily on the Swan River and links South Perth with the Perth CBD. This enables people who live in South Perth to commute to work in the city. It operates between the Mends St jetty in South Perth and the Barrack Street jetty adjacent to the CBD.

Perth has two main airports – domestic and international – located approximately 8 kilometres east of the Perth CBD.



The fourth busiest airport in Australia it services Australian and Indian Ocean destinations, as well as Johannesburg, Auckland, Dubai, Guangzhou and Doha.

The airport has seen strong passenger growth in the last few years, primarily due to the state's prolonged mining boom and an increase in traffic from international low-cost carrier airlines.

In 2012, Perth Airport's passenger growth of 11.7% (internationally) and 6.9% (domestically) resulted in an overall increase of 10.3%.

Passenger numbers have trebled in the past 10 years with more than 12.6 million people travelling through the airport in 2012. Based on average growth rate, this figure will double to 24 million by 2019.

Limited public transport access is a major issue facing the airport and there are plans in place to construct a rail link to the CBD but this is still very much in the planning stage. A taxi ride from either airport to the CBD will take between 20 and 30 minutes depending on the time of day and currently costs around \$40.

Education

Australians embrace education and place a high priority on it for their children, and in some areas - advances and approach to learning - are viewed as leaders.

While education is compulsory for all school-age students, participation rates are amongst the highest in the world with Western Australian school students outperforming not only students in other Australian states but right up there with the best in the world.

Australia is also a major exporter of education throughout South East Asia and The Middle East in particular with qualifications and courses undertaken here highly rated and sought after. Australia rates third in the English-speaking world for international students just behind the USA and UK.

Due to its close proximity, Perth has become a major centre for education for Asian students with more than 30,000 students undertaking fee-paying studies in WA.

With a rich choice of options between government and independent private schools, new arrivals in Perth have a plethora of choices available to them.

Based on current government statistics, Western Australia has a total of more than 420,000 primary and secondary government and independent/private schools (approx 280,000 government/140,000 non-government). Of these, around three quarters or 300,000 are located in Perth and surrounding suburbs (190,000+ government and 110,000+ non-government).

The non-government, private schools receive substantial government funding and are operated by a combination of religious, cultural and private organisations with both co-ed and single gender options.

Fees and structures vary with many offering places to full-fee international students and boarders. Some of the more prominent of these include:

Boy's Only Private Schools:

- Aquinas Catholic College
- Christ Church Anglican Grammar School
- Guildford Anglican Grammar School
- Hale Anglican School
- Trinity Catholic College
- Wesley Uniting Church College

Girl's Only Private Schools:

- Methodist Ladies College
- Penhros Uniting Church College
- Perth Anglican College
- Presbyterian Ladies College
- St. Hilda's Anglican Girls School
- St. Mary's Anglican Girls School

Co-ed Private Schools:

- Carmel Jewish School, Dianella
- Chisholm Catholic College, Mt. Lawley
- Guildford Anglican Grammar Primary School (Kindergarten to Year 6)
- Mazenod Catholic College, Lesmurdie
- Sacred Heart, Sorrento
- St. Stephens Uniting School, Carramar

Fees vary widely depending on the school and boarding/day student options.

Specialist Need Schools:

The WA Education Department caters for students with special needs (intellectual and physical disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders) through its Education Supports Centres but more and



more special needs students, including those with severe disabilities, are being assimilated into regular schools.

Apart from the disability discrimination laws that state that no school can refuse enrolment to a student on the basis of disability, there is a growing belief that segregating and isolating special needs students, especially at a younger age, may lead to them falling further behind able-bodied students both academically and socially.

The Department of Education has a website dedicated to 'Special Education Needs' and it can be accessed via <http://det.wa.edu.au/ssen/detcms/portal/>

These two websites are also a good source of further more detailed options on government and private schools:

1. www.det.wa.gov.au (WA Department of Education & Training - Govt)
2. www.des.wa.gov.au (Department of Educational Services – non-Govt)

There is also a publication called 'Guide for Parents' that provides information on non-government schools. It's available through the Department of Education (www.des.wa.gov.au).

Ethnic & Cultural Groups in Perth

Western Australia prides itself on its rich ethnic history and links in particular to both European descendants and, more recently, its close link to South East Asia.

You will find a comprehensive list and contact details for more than a hundred different ethnic groups and cultural organizations located around Perth, on the WA Government's website under the auspices of the Department of Multicultural Interests at: www.omi.wa.gov.au/omi_organisations.cfm

Here are the various groups and organisations covered on the site.

- Abruzzese Emigrant Association of Australia Inc
- Afghan Islamic Association in WA Inc
- African Australian Union (AAU)
- African Communities Council of Australia (ACCA) Inc
- African Community of WA
- African Professionals of Australia Inc
- African Women's Council of Australia [AWCoA]
- Al-Hidayah Centre
- Alliance Francaise de Perth
- American Women's Club of Perth
- Anywaa Community Western Australia (ACWA) Inc
- Australia Baha'i Community WA
- Australia-China Friendship Society
- Australia-Japan Society of Geraldton-Greenough Inc
- Australian African Aid
- Australian Anglo Indian Association Inc, The
- Australian Arab Association
- Australian Asian Association
- Austria Club of Western Australia Inc, The
- Bangladesh Australia Association of Western Australia Inc (BAAWA)
- Baris Education and Culture Foundation
- Belarusan Association in WA
- Bengali Association of WA
- Bija Cultural Association
- Bor Youth Association in WA Inc.
- Bosnian Cultural and Recreation Centre
- Brazil WA - Brazilian Association of WA
- Buddha's Light Association WA
- Bulgarian Association
- Bunbury Multicultural Group
- Burmese Association of WA, The
- Burundians Community in WA
- Cadena Multicultural Association
- Cambodian Buddhist Society of WA Inc, The
- Cameroonian Friends in Australia Inc, Association of
- Chung Wah Association
- Congolese Community of WA Inc, The
- Council of Hungarian Associations in WA
- Czech & Slovak Association in WA Inc
- Damayan Filipino Community
- Dinka Women Support Group WA Inc
- Dutch Society Neerlandia WA Inc
- Eritrean Association of WA Inc, The United
- Ethiopians in WA, Unity of
- Ethnic Communities Council of WA Inc
- Fiji WA Association
- Filipino Australian Club of Perth Inc
- Filipino Australian Multicultural Association Inc
- Goan Overseas Association WA Inc
- Goldfields Multicultural Association
- Greek Cypriot Community of WA
- Guinean Community Association of WA Inc, The
- HAKKA Association of Western Australia Inc



- Hellenic Community of WA
- Hellenic Cultural Society
- Hindi Samaj of Western Australia Inc
- Hungarian Golden Village and Cultural Centre Inc
- Ilankai Tamil Sangam Association of WA Inc
- Indian Society of Western Australia (ISWA)
- International Romani Union
- Islamic Council of WA, The
- Italo–Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre Inc
- Jafary Community Inc
- Jewish Community Council of WA
- Karen Welfare Association of WA Inc
- Korean Association of WA
- Kosovo Australian Association
- Krahn Association of Australia [KAA] Inc
- Latin American Association
- Latin American Cultural Association [LACA]
- Liberian Community of Australia, Association of
- Macedonian Community of WA Inc
- Macedonian Society of Geraldton
- Maendeleo Association
- Maison Katangese Inc
- Malayalee Association
- Malaysians in WA, Association of
- Maltese Association of WA
- Mexico in Western Australia Inc, Friends of
- Midwest Filipino – Australian Cultural Club Inc
- Mozambique Society of WA
- Nuer Community Associaton
- Pakistan Association of Western Australia
- Patronato Inca-Cgil 'Italian Migrant Organisation'
- Peel Multicultural Association Inc
- Perth Asian Community Centre
- Pilbara Multicultural Association Inc
- Pojulu Community Association WA
- Polish Community Council of Western Australia Inc
- Polish Senior Citizens Club
- Portuguese Cultural and Welfare Association of WA
- Rhein-Donau Club Inc
- Rhodesian Association of WA (Inc)
- Serbian Community Centre
- Shandong Association WA
- Sierra Leonean Community
- Sikh Association of Western Australia Inc
- Somaliland Women, Children and Youth Association
- South Sudan Community Association WA
- South-West Australian Zimbabwean Association
- Spanish Speaking Seniors Association
- Sri Lanka Muslim Society of WA
- Sri Lankan Cultural Society of Western Australia, The
- Swami Vivekananda Association Inc
- Tamil Association of WA Inc
- Tanzanian Community of WA
- Thai–Australian Association of WA Inc
- Tribal Refugee Welfare of Western Australia Inc
- Turkish Australian Culture House
- United Nations Association of Australia (WA Division)
- Vietnamese Community in Western Australia
- Western Australia Mandingo Association Inc
- Western Australia Sri Lankan (Ceylon) Association Inc
- Zambians Living in WA, Organisation of (OZALIWA)

Home Ownership/Rental

Owning your own home is the great Australian dream so you will find banks and financial institutions compete vigorously for the homeowner's business, offering very attractive mortgage rates across the board, especially in view of the current global financial situation.

Federal and State Government also offer generous incentives for first homebuyers and homebuilders. Substantial deposits and/or a demonstrable saving history are required as is proof of your ability to meet regular mortgage payments.

There are some property purchase and ownership laws that are peculiar to Western Australia, like the 7-day cooling off period that is offered in other states for home purchases.

There is a comprehensive chapter elsewhere in this book on home ownership and the buying, selling and conveyancing (settlement) process that is worth reading.

The best advice I can give in the search for a home to buy (or to rent for that matter) is, once you have decided on the area you think you would like to live and the style, size and price range, to visit real estate agents in the area.

There are hundreds of homes for sale (and rent) displayed in the agent's windows and there are always home opens to visit and view.

There is also realestate.com.au, reiwa.com.au and domain.com.au on the internet. They carry details on thousands of homes of all shapes, sizes and price spread right across the Perth metropolitan area. The

daily papers (especially on Saturday and Sunday) carry extensive property features.

The current median price range is in the mid \$400 thousand range. Depending again on the suburb and location of the property you will find a range of homes above and below that median range.

Contracts, clauses and agreements are usually based on standard industry forms and procedures but lawyers like myself are always available to advise and consult on the process if you are at all in doubt.

Rental Market

Fuelled by a lack of new and existing homes for sale due to the large number of new arrivals into WA every year, the home rental market was, up until recently, quite tight with a limited number of rentals available.

However due to record low interest rates, which in turn is causing a flight of renters into the first home buyers' market, rental numbers have spiked recently, rising by over 50% over the previous year.

With more rental properties available for rent, tenants now have a greater choice and as a result, landlords have to set competitive rents, a quantum shift from previous constantly rising rates.

The Residential Tenancies Act requires that a security bond be deposited with a bond administrator (through the leasing agent). That bond is usually equivalent to a month's rent on the property you are leasing and is refunded to the tenant on termination of the lease, provided the property condition matches the Property

Condition Report that is carried out at the time of taking up the tenancy.

A landlord cannot request more than 2 week's rent in advance within the first two weeks of the tenancy. They also cannot increase the rent without 60 days written notice or within 6 months of the commencement of a tenancy.

With a fixed term tenancy, the rent can only be increased if the contract specifically allows it.

Tenancy contracts can be for a fixed term or periodic. Tenancy can be ended by both the tenant and the landlord with the tenant having to give 21 days' notice that they are vacating and the landlord 60 days' notice.

Fixed term contracts usually run for six or 12 months with options available for extensions and renewal. If a tenant wished to break a fixed-term lease, they will remain liable for the total rental amount until the end of the contract period or until the landlord finds a replacement tenant.

Tenants are subject to regular inspections (but the landlord or agent must give 21 days' written notice of intention to enter the premises for the purpose inspection) and if a tenant is found to be in breach of any aspect of the tenancy agreement or falls into arrears on payments, they can be issued with a Breach Notice and/or Notice of Eviction.

Tenants and landlords equally have rights of redress and arbitration through the Department of Commerce and, if mediation does not work, the Magistrates Court is the forum where disputes can be resolved legally.



As a rough 'rule of thumb' rental rates in Perth generally equate fairly closely with the current selling price of the property. These figures will vary from suburb to suburb but say the home you are renting is listed for sale at around \$400,000, then your rent could be anywhere from \$390 to \$410-\$420 a week.

However, it is best to do your homework and research first. Look for 'home open' times in the area you like and visit the property to inspect it.

The Property Manager or Leasing Agent will have application forms available to fill in. Usually there is no application fee to file an application but some agents do and can charge up to \$50 (which is fully refundable if you are not successful or can go against your bond or initial rental payments).

Be aware that, like when you open a bank account, you will need forms of identification, proof of capacity to meet rental payments and references from former rental agents and/or family and friends in order to secure the property.

There is a vetting process with all applications and the agent is under no obligation to advise you why you were not successful if you are not accepted for a rental. Rent is not subject to GST.

The System

Dealing with Government Bureaucracy – Taxation, Health, Unemployment Benefits/Assistance, Visas, Pensions, and Superannuation.

None of us like dealing with, or relish the thought of the ever-present existence of ‘red tape’ that accompanies any interface with government. But, if you are going to live in Australia, coming into contact and dealing with these departments is inevitable.

The best tip is to do as much homework as you can online beforehand.

Find the right department to contact for your requirements, look up their site (we’ve provided a detailed list of

government websites in this chapter) and once you are satisfied you have all the information you need, make an appointment and go armed with copies of every piece of supporting documentation you think that may be required.

That will include birth, death and marriage certificates, overseas and interstate driver’s licences, work and personal references, proof of funds, passports, residency and employment visa applications if appropriate ... anything and everything you think will prevent a public servant from saying ‘Oh, you will need this form and this information before I can process this application’ and you have to go away and make another appointment.





The Seven Essential 'First Steps' For New Arrivals

Here are seven important steps that you should undertake as soon as possible after arriving in Australia. These will involve contact and liaison with different State and Federal Government departments:

1. Apply for a Tax File Number (TFN)

Do this first. To receive an income in Australia, you need a Tax File Number (TFN).

2. Register with Medicare

The Australian Government provides help with basic medical expenses through a scheme called Medicare. (Only applies for Permanent Resident (PRP) status and not Temporary Resident status)

3. Open a bank account

In Australia, most income including salary or wages and government benefits are paid directly into a bank account.

4. Register with Centrelink

Centrelink is a government agency that delivers a range of services to the community. (Only applies for Permanent Resident (PRP) status and not Temporary Resident status)

5. Register for English Classes

Communicating in English is very important and the key to your successful settlement.

6. Enrol Your Children in School

Under Australian law, children must attend school until they are 15 years old.

7. Apply for a Driver's Licence

A valid current drivers' licence, issued by the government transport authority in your state is required in order to be able to drive in Australia, register a motor vehicle and gain insurance.

This website link to the Australian Government's Department of Immigration website should provide most of the contacts and initial information you will require in order to take each of these above steps. Other useful websites and contacts are listed at the end of the chapter:

www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/

Beginning a Life in Australia

The Beginning a Life in Australia booklet welcomes newly arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants to Australia. It provides useful national, state/territory and local settlement information is available to download via the above site in English and 37 other languages.

This is a very useful tool and I recommend that you download a copy in either English or your own language (if available) as soon as you can.

Obtain Your Tax File Number (TFN)

You need one of these in order to work, receive childcare benefits, file a tax return at the end of the financial year and a lot of other essentials.

You will need to register at the ATO (Australian Tax Office). The good news is that this is a process that can be conducted online. There are services available to new arrivals that can handle the process for you but they will charge you for the service. As far as I am aware there is no charge from the ATO to establish a TFN.

If you do not have a TFN, banks and other financial institutions are legally bound to withhold tax on interest earnings at the top tax rate of 46.5% from your account. And no one can afford to pay that sort of impost!

If you have arranged to open a local banking account prior to arriving in Australia and arranging a TFN, as a non-resident, by law the ATO is obliged to withhold a 10% tax on interest earnings.

So, you have a pretty compelling financial incentive to obtain your TFN as quickly as possible.

Here is a table of contacts downloaded from the ATO website showing how and where you can make contact with the ATO. You will see that they now also have 'shopfront offices' out in the community so a trip to the ATO these days can be as convenient and non-daunting as popping down the shops for a loaf of bread and a carton of milk!

| Australian Taxation Office (ATO) contact details | |
|--|--|
| Telephone | 13 2861 |
| In person | See: ATO shopfront locations |
| Apply for a TFN online | See: Online individual Tax File Number (TFN) registration |
| Homepage | See: Australian Taxation Office (ATO) |

Register With Medicare & Centrelink (for certain visas)

Established in 1975, and initially known as Medibank, Medicare is Australia's publicly funded health care system, operated by Medicare Australia.

Medicare funds affordable primary health care for all Australian citizens and permanent residents. If you have a Medicare card you can receive subsidised treatment from medical practitioners, dentists, optometrists, nurse practitioners, eligible midwives, free treatment in public hospitals and access to other



health professionals who have a Medicare provider number.

Since 1999, Medicare has been supplemented by a Private Health Insurance Rebate, where the government funds at least 30% of any private health insurance premium covering people eligible for Medicare.

To apply for a Medicare card for you and your family, you will need to download the registration form on the website. Medicare falls under the umbrella of the Department of Human Services and you will find the form on the site: www.humanservices.gov.au.

Click on Medicare and you will be linked to information and the downloadable form. Alternately, you can visit a Medicare branch – there are currently ten branches dotted around Perth (mostly in major shopping centres and central locations) – and ask for assistance.

You will also find links to Centrelink and Child Support (the government's social welfare payment and assistance arms).

You should also take the opportunity to register with Centrelink when you visit the Medicare site.

All these pages contain specific information relating to migrants, refugees and visitors. Look for the relevant headings on these pages.

Register For English Classes

Communicating in English is very important and the key to your successful settlement in Australia. It is our spoken language and to assist you in settling in to your new home, it makes life that

much easier if you are able to speak the language. You will need an acceptable level of English reading and writing in order to obtain employment.

English language courses are provided under the **Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)**. As a new resident, you may be entitled to receive free English language tuition of up to 510 hours.

However, you should register as soon as possible after you arrive or you could lose your entitlement.

Visit www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/amep/

for help and assistance in registering for these very worthwhile classes.

Enrol Your Children In School

As indicated, education is compulsory in Australia for children over five and up to the age of 15. Churches and other groups provide private schooling at varying fee levels but public schooling is free to every Australian.

Refer to the previous information in this section for details on contact for private and public enrolment.

Other Government-Related Topics Of Interest

Superannuation

In Australia, superannuation arrangements are government-supported and encouraged, and minimum provisions are compulsory for employees.

Employers are required by law to pay a proportion of an employee's salaries and wages (9.25% as of July 1st 2013) into a superannuation fund, but people are

encouraged to put aside additional funds into superannuation.

From 1 January 2014, employers are required to pay default contributions to an authorised My Super product. The minimum obligation required by employers is set to increase to 12% gradually stepping annually from 2013 to 2020.

You can withdraw funds out of a superannuation fund when and if you meet one of the 'Conditions of Release' contained in Schedule 1 of the Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Regulations 1994. (See the following site for details of special conditions): www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_reg/sir1994582/sch1.html

Pensions

The Australian government provides income support and access to a range of concessions for eligible older Australian citizens but in order to qualify for the Age Pension, you must satisfy age and residence requirements plus a Means Test that assesses your assets. How much Age Pension you will get depends on your income, assets and other circumstances.

Age requirements:

Your eligibility for Age Pension depends on your current age and when you were born. If you were born before 1 July 1947, you have reached the qualifying age for Age Pension. From 1 July 2017, the qualifying age for Age Pension will increase from 65 years to 65 and a half years.



*(For males only. Females born before Jan 1, 1949 qualify for the pension)

The qualifying age will then rise by six months every two years, reaching 67 by 1 July 2023.

Information on the Age Pension can also be found on the Department of Human Services website within the Centrelink section.

FIRB

(Based on information gathered from Australian Immigration website www.australia-migration.com)

The Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) is the board that oversees and regulates investment in property in Australia by foreigners or temporary Australian residents.

The Australian Government is aware that some Australian citizens are cautious about foreign individuals or companies buying residential real estate.

It strives to ensure that any foreign real estate ownership it allows is of benefit to the community and in keeping with the community needs.

Therefore, the Government insists that all applications from foreign citizens or



companies to buy residential real estate (either already developed - such as houses and apartments - to be developed, to be redeveloped or existing only at plan stage) are put before the FIRB.

This advisory board reports to Treasury and reviews all applications to purchase residential real estate, no matter the value of the intended purchase, by anyone who is NOT an Australian citizen, an approved migrant, a permanent resident of Australia, a foreign national holding a permanent visa or a person who, despite being a foreign citizen, is entitled to permanent residence status in Australia.

There are usually no problems when the foreign spouse of an Australian citizen applies to be allowed to purchase property with his/her spouse on a 50/50 or "Joint Tenant" basis, but there still must be an application to the FIRB.

How long does an FIRB review take?

Thirty days is needed for an application to be looked at by the FIRB. There are no "general" approvals. An approval can only be granted on a specifically nominated property. Therefore, real estate contracts with foreign citizens **must contain a clause saying that going ahead with the purchase is conditional upon getting FIRB approval** and that 30 days must be allowed for that approval to be granted or denied.

What influences an FIRB decision?

If the FIRB feels that the residential real estate in question is only being purchased by a foreign citizen or company for the purpose of renting it out, or because the purchaser wants to speculate on the property's future value, permission to

purchase will be refused.

Conversely approval IS usually granted to foreign applicants in the following circumstances:

- Where the applicant is residing in Australia on the basis of a Temporary Entry Visa (with more than 12 months validity) and wants to buy a residence for their own use (providing the property is sold when the person no longer lives in Australia). Applicants who are entitled to purchase on these terms include:
 - students over 18 studying at a recognised tertiary institution for more than one year who require accommodation (a general limit of \$300,000 applies to the value of any such property acquired by a student temporarily resident in Australia)
 - long stay retirees and people in Australia for work reasons who need accommodation. Again, any property must be sold when these categories of buyers no longer live in Australia. (This category does not cover people with visitor or bridging visas)
- Where a company from a foreign country wants to provide housing for its senior executives while they are posted to Australia for more than 12 months - again, as long as the property is sold when the employee is no longer living in Australia. These senior executives have to be specifically named. Usually, a limit of two house purchases per company is allowed.

- The purchase of an additional residence, such as a “weekender” for recreational use, is not approved under any of the above circumstances.

Buying a property from a developer

Apartments or townhouses in a proposed development, or in a development which has just been completed but has not yet been occupied or sold, can be sold to foreign investors as long as the developer applies in advance for this to be allowed.

If a foreign citizen buys a property in this way (often called “buying off the plan”), the property, when built, can be rented out, sold or used by the purchaser. However, foreign interests cannot hold more than half the apartments or townhouses in any one development.

You should ask to see a copy of the developer’s approval letter to ensure that FIRB approval exists for sales to foreign citizens and be aware that, on purchase of any apartment, new or old, you are liable to pay regular levies to cover the costs of the property and grounds that all the residents use.



Purchasing within a resort

If the Australian Treasurer nominates that a particular resort is an Integrated Tourism Resort, then both residences and vacant land can be purchased within that resort by anybody without any FIRB assessment taking place. The seller of any such property would make this status known to all prospective purchasers.

To be considered an Integrated Tourism Resort, a venue must fulfil certain conditions.

Commercial real estate

FIRB approval must be sought by any foreign individual or company which wants to purchase existing commercial and non-residential real estate valued at \$5 million or more.

This form of purchase is normally approved, unless considered “contrary to the national interest”.

If the commercial and/or non-residential real estate in question does not yet exist but is at the development or major redevelopment stage, permission to purchase is usually given, again, unless the purchase is considered “contrary to the national interest”. Construction must also start within a specified period of time.

Investor Information required

You must include your name, address, nationality, type of property you are interested in, a copy of the contract, your passport number and other details relevant to the type of category of purchase you want to make.



If, for example, you want to buy under one of the temporary resident categories outlined before, the FIRB will want to see a signed statement that the residence will not be rented out, and will be sold to Australian or other eligible purchasers when you leave Australia.

Applications to FIRB

Applicants must write to:

The Executive Member
Foreign Investment Review Board
c/- The Treasury
Canberra ACT 2600

and request a Form 3 Notice under Section 26 of the Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act 1975

The FIRB can also be contacted by phone for general enquiries on **+61 6 263 3795** or fax **+61 6 263 2940** or visit the website shown below the heading above.

In this chapter I have attempted to provide a snapshot of the most valuable and relevant information for new arrivals to Australia. It is based not just on research and contact with relevant agencies and departments but also on my own personal experience as an immigrant

to Australia back in the early 1990s.

It is also provided in the hope that you will not make some of the same basic mistakes we made because we hadn't undertaken enough research.

There are registered Migration Agents who can provide assistance to you in your efforts to immigrate to Australia. But tread warily and only use the services of 'approved' agents. You will find lists of these people at www.immi.gov.au/visas/migration-agents. In order to gain they must first apply and be approved as Registered Agents by The Office of Migration.

Legal consultants like myself are also able to provide assistance with various aspects of your migration, especially where you may have an intention to buy a business or wish to establish a business in this country.

Forewarned is forearmed. So as the Boy Scout motto says 'Be Prepared'. It is my sincere hope that the information contained in this section is of some assistance in the settling in process in your new home and stand ready to be of further help wherever I can.

JULES' OWN JOURNEY

We arrived in Australia in July 2003 but already had a head start on most new arrivals. We had first come to Australia in 2001 on holiday to stay with my wife's sister and her husband who had emigrated to Perth and were well established.

We used the time to visit different areas, find out more about the country, and Perth in particular, and to look at a possible business we could acquire.

We engaged a Migration Agent in Johannesburg, who was very well connected back in WA. He advised that the only way we would be able to emigrate to Australia was via a '457 Visa'. This is a 'work/investment' based scheme whereby you agree to buy an existing business in Australia with a minimum \$100,000 investment and employ a number of Australian residents. We liaised closely with our Migration Agent to ensure we complied with all the conditions of our Visa, which are stringent and can result in cancellation of your status if you breach or fail to deliver on the conditions laid down.

After meeting all our visa requirements, we closed our business when the shopping centre management refused to renew the lease on our fast food business after the three-year term. We had invested more than \$100,000 in fitting out and re-decorating the business so it was a valuable lesson learned to A) Ensure that you had ongoing tenure options after the lease and B) Always be wary and careful of leases in shopping centres.

Initially both my wife and I worked the business, but after a while I decided to explore what would be involved in qualifying as a lawyer in Australia. Although I had practiced property law in South Africa for more than 20 years that did not admit me to the Australian Bar. I had to re-qualify and, thanks to some in-depth research I was able to obtain credits towards a number of subjects and only had to sit four examinations instead of ten.

As I said, we were fortunate, in that we had family contacts on the ground and were able to stay with family while we found our feet.

When we went to purchase a house, we had to get FIRB Approval (see reference in main article to FIRB's significance) in order to be able to purchase a house. We were still classed as foreigners so we had to go through an approval process. Although it was a formality, it is an important step to remember.

We were hit by the disparate exchange rate between the Rand and the Australian Dollar but managed to provide a substantial deposit and secure a home loan to purchase our property. (A word of advice here – make sure you get FIRB Approval



and your TFN before talking to a bank because they will not lend 'foreigners' money to buy property in Australia until you comply with your visa requirements or qualify for eligibility for citizenship or Permanent Residence).

So the best advice I can offer new arrivals is to do your due diligence in advance. Find out all the information you need to know about issues visa compliance, residency status and FIRB Approval. If you don't have the resources or the ability to carry out this task, appoint someone like myself, or a trusted Migration Agent (with connections in both your own country and Australia) to be your 'gatekeeper'.

It can be a traumatic experience being uprooted from familiar surroundings, where you have friends and family as support, and landing in a country where you perhaps know no one or their customs and habits. Our Migration Agent and our on-the-ground family helped ease the 'pain' a little but it was still a pretty scary undertaking.

That's why I am so keen to help out new arrivals – but having said that, for whatever reason, you have decided to make the move to a new country in Australia, so you have to take ownership of your life and give it your best shot.

But remember there is good advice out there from government departments and individuals like myself that is designed to make your transition as smooth, painless and enjoyable as possible.

We are now Australian citizens and can look back now and say that, as traumatic as it was at the outset, we are glad we made the move when we did. We made mistakes, everyone does, but we learned by them and I'd be more than happy to pass on the benefit of my experience to anyone who is willing to listen.

The following is the list of Australian Government websites referred to earlier in the chapter:

Australian Government websites

| Organisation | Url |
|---|--|
| Australian Bureau of Statistics | www.abs.gov.au |
| Australian Education International | www.aei.gov.au |
| Australian Government | www.australia.gov.au |
| Australian Prudential Regulation Authority | www.apra.gov.au |
| Australian Taxation Office | www.ato.gov.au |
| Bureau of Metereology (BOM) | www.bom.gov.au |
| Centrelink | www.centrelink.gov.au |
| ComLaw | www.comlaw.gov.au |
| Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations | www.deewr.gov.au |
| Department of Immigration and Citizenship | www.immi.gov.au |
| Fair Work Ombudsman | www.fairwork.gov.au |
| Family Assistance Office | www.familyassist.gov.au |
| Medicare | www.medicareaustralia.gov.au |
| MyChild.gov.au | www.mychild.gov.au |
| Office of Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) | www.mara.gov.au |
| Tax Practitioners Board | www.tpb.gov.au |

Western Australian Government websites

| Organisation | Url |
|---|--|
| Business Growth Centre | www.bgc.wa.gov.au |
| Business Migration | www.businessmigration.wa.gov.au |
| Career Centre (Career Services) | www.trainingwa.wa.gov.au/careercentre |
| Department for Communities | www.communities.wa.gov.au |
| Department of Agriculture and Food | www.agric.wa.gov.au |
| Department of Commerce Western Australia | www.commerce.wa.gov.au |
| Department of Education Western Australia (DET) | www.det.wa.edu.au |
| Department of Health | www.health.wa.gov.au |



| | |
|---|--|
| Department of Local Government | www.dlg.wa.gov.au |
| Department of Mines and Petroleum | www.dmp.wa.gov.au |
| Department of Regional Development and Lands | www.rdl.wa.gov.au |
| Department of State Development | www.dsd.wa.gov.au |
| Department of Training and Workforce Development | www.dtwd.wa.gov.au |
| Department of Transport | www.transport.wa.gov.au |
| Department of Treasury and Finance | www.dtf.wa.gov.au |
| Government of Western Australia | www.wa.gov.au |
| Insurance Commission of Western Australia | www.icwa.wa.gov.au |
| Jobs.wa.gov.au | www.jobs.wa.gov.au |
| Migration | www.migration.wa.gov.au |
| Office of Energy | www.energy.wa.gov.au |
| Parliament of Western Australia | www.parliament.wa.gov.au |
| Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) | www.smallbusiness.wa.gov.au |
| Training courses | www.trainingwa.wa.gov.au/trainingcourses |
| TrainingWA | www.trainingwa.wa.gov.au |
| Transperth | www.transperth.wa.gov.au |
| TransWA | www.transwa.wa.gov.au |
| Western Australia Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC) | www.wairc.wa.gov.au |
| Western Australia Police | www.police.wa.gov.au |
| Working With Children Check | www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au |

Occupation or work-related websites

| Organisation | Url |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Australian Franchises | www.australianfranchises.com.au |
| Business Brokers Association of WA | www.bbawa.com |
| CareerJet.com.au | www.careerjet.com.au |
| CareerOne | www.careerone.com.au |
| GoodCompany | www.goodcompany.com.au |

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|--|--|
| Job Guide (direct) | www.jobguide.thegoodguides.com.au |
| Job Guide | www.jobguide.deewr.gov.au |
| Job Search | www.jobsearch.gov.au |
| Jobs.wa.gov.au | www.jobs.wa.gov.au |
| LinkMe | www.linkme.com.au |
| MiningNews.net | www.miningnews.net |
| MyCareer | www.mycareer.com.au |
| myfuture | www.myfuture.edu.au |
| Next Step Australia | www.nextstepaustralia.com |
| NowHiring | www.nowhiring.com.au |
| Performance Business Sales | www.pbsbusiness.com.au |
| Recruitment and Consulting Services Association (RCSA) | www.rcsa.com.au |
| Resume Templates | www.resumetemplates.com.au |
| SEEK | www.seek.com.au |
| SEEKVolunteer | www.volunteer.com.au |
| Top Franchise | www.topfranchise.com.au |
| VolunteeringWA | www.volunteeringwa.org.au |
| WestJobs | www.westjobs.com.au |

Regional Development Commission websites

| Organisation | Url |
|---|--|
| Gascoyne Development Commission | www.gdc.wa.gov.au |
| Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission | www.gedc.wa.gov.au |
| Great Southern Development Commission | www.gsdw.wa.gov.au |
| Kimberley Development Commission | www.kdc.wa.gov.au |
| Mid West Development Commission | www.mwdc.wa.gov.au |
| Peel Development Commission | www.peel.wa.gov.au |
| Pilbara Development Commission | www.pdc.wa.gov.au |
| South West Development Commission | www.swdc.wa.gov.au |
| Wheatbelt Development Commission | www.wheatbelt.wa.gov.au |



Education and other important information websites

| Organisation | Url |
|---|--|
| Curtin English Language Centre | www.humanities.curtin.edu.au/future_students/celc |
| Perth Exchange | www.perthexchange.com.au |
| Alexander Education Group | www.alexander.wa.edu.au |
| Australian Qualifications Framework | www.aqf.edu.au |
| Cambridge College | www.cambridgecollege.com.au |
| Centre for English Language Teaching | www.celt.uwa.edu.au |
| EF International Language Schools | www.ef-australia.com.au |
| Embassy CES | www.embassyces.com |
| Education and Training International | www.eti.wa.edu.au |
| Euro Centres | www.eurocentres.com |
| Expat Blog | www.expat-blog.com |
| Expat Forum | www.expatform.com |
| KAPLAN International Colleges | www.kaplaninternational.com |
| Kingston International College | www.kingstoncollege.com.au |
| Milner International College of English | www.milner.wa.edu.au |
| Murdoch Institute of Technology | www.murdochinstitute.wa.edu.au |
| Navitas English (College) | www.navitasenglish.com |
| Phoenix Academy | www.phoenixacademy.com.au |
| Perth Institute of Business Technology | www.pibt.wa.edu.au |
| Perth International College of English | www.pice.com.au |
| Translation to English | www.translationtoenglish.com.au |
| West Australian English College | www.westaustrianenglish.wa.edu.au |
| Western Australian Regional Capitals Alliance | www.waregionalcapitals.com.au |
| West Coast International College of English | www.westcoastcollege.com.au |
| Yellow Pages | www.yellowpages.com.au |
| White Pages | www.whitepages.com.au |

Entertainment, sport and travel websites

| Organisation | Url |
|---|--|
| AFL (Australian Football League) | www.afl.com.au |
| Air North | www.airnorth.com.au |
| Australia Post | www.auspost.com.au |
| Australian Financial Review (newspaper) | www.afr.com |
| Best Phone Deals | www.bestphonedeads.com.au |
| EatingWA | www.eatingwa.com.au |
| Enjoy PERTH | www.enjoyperth.com.au |
| Facebook | www.facebook.com |
| facetime | www.facetime.com.au |
| Foxtel | www.foxtel.com.au |
| Fremantle Dockers | www.fremantlefc.com.au |
| GWN (Golden West Network) | www.igwn.com.au |
| KidSpot.com.au | www.kidspot.com.au |
| LinkedIn | www.linkedin.com |
| Loconut | www.loconut.com.au |
| Look at WA | www.lookatwa.com.au |
| MeetUp | www.meetup.com |
| Newspapers.com.au | www.newspapers.com.au |
| NIB Stadium | www.nibstadium.com.a |
| Nine Network | www.channelnine.ninemsn.com.au |
| Optus | www.optus.com.au |
| Perth Glory | www.perthglory.com.au |
| Perth International Arts Festival | www.perthfestival.com.au |
| PerthNow (The Sunday Times) | www.perthnow.com.au |
| Qantas | www.qantas.com.au |
| SBS (Special Broadcasting Service) | www.sbs.com.au |
| Seven Network | www.7perth.com.au |
| Show Me Perth | www.showmep Perth.com.au |
| Skywest | www.skywest.com.au |
| Streets of Perth | www.streetsofperth.com.au |
| Telstra | www.telstra.com.au |