

SYDNEY



Low vacancy, high demand and a city built around suburbs.

In brief...

- Known worldwide for its lifestyle appeal, yet relocating there often means navigating one of the region's tightest housing markets.
- Spanning 650+ suburbs, it is a city where housing choice, school access and commute time are closely linked.
- It remains Australia's highest-cost rental market, particularly in beachside and harbour districts.
- Vacancy sits at around 1.8%, meaning quality rentals move fast - often within 24 hours of listing.
- In premium expat suburbs, multiple applications on a single property are common, especially for family homes near key schools.

Key rental realities

- **12-month leases** are standard. Shorter terms available but harder to negotiate.
- **Holding deposit:** 1 week's rent to secure a property and the landlord is locked in for 7 days once taken.
- **Security deposit:** 4 weeks' rent, held by a government body and returned at the end of the tenancy.
- **Payment speed:** Deposit and advance rent due within 24-48 hrs once offer accepted.
- **Negotiation:** Offering below asking rent is likely to lose the property.
- **Diplomatic clauses** are not standard and increasingly hard to negotiate.



What's shaping the rental market

Sydney's rental market has stabilised after years of sharp growth – but supply remains tight and several trends are reshaping where people are choosing to live.

More people, not enough homes: Sydney adds over 100,000 residents a year. New homes are not being built fast enough to keep up, and that gap has been widening since 2020.

New builds are concentrated in the wrong places – most new apartment completions are in outer Western Sydney. The suburbs where expat families actually want to live are seeing very little new stock come to market.

Apartments are harder to find than houses: As house rents have climbed out of reach for many renters, demand has shifted heavily into apartments. Vacancy in the apartment market is now lower than for houses across most of inner Sydney.

Western Sydney has genuinely changed: Parramatta is no longer just an affordable alternative – it is a business destination in its own right. NAB, Westpac and Deloitte are based there. A new metro line will cut the journey to the city centre to under 20 minutes. Rents run 30–40% below the Eastern Suburbs.



The pet reform – since May 2025, landlords can no longer refuse a pet without a valid legal reason. For assignees relocating with animals, the pool of available properties has genuinely widened.



Getting around

A city built on one transport network

Sydney trains, the metro, buses, ferries and light rail operate as one integrated network with contactless payment accepted across all modes.

The ferry is not just a tourist attraction

Sydney Ferries form part of the regular commuter network, not just a visitor service. Routes between Manly, Mosman and Circular Quay typically take around 20–30 minutes and are widely used for daily travel.

Sydney's geography works differently

Because of the city's harbour and dispersed layout, travel time is often a better indicator than distance. Shorter journeys by road can take longer than more distant suburbs connected by rail or ferry.

Schooling Options

Sydney's school system is well-regarded and relatively straightforward to navigate, but a few practical realities shape decision-making in practice – particularly catchment zones, fee levels and availability of places across different school types.

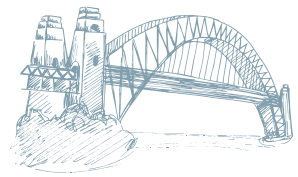
Government schools are free for citizens and permanent residents, with enrolment generally determined by residential catchment zones. Catholic systemic schools charge modest fees and are also influenced by parish boundaries, so location still plays a role in access.

Independent private schools are more flexible on location but fees often exceed AUD 20,000 a year and waiting lists can be long. International schools offer British, American, IB and bilingual curricula. Some have more flexibility on mid-year entry than leading independents.



NEIGHBOURHOOD SNAPSHOT

On the harbour living and beaches:



Eastern Suburbs

**Bondi, Coogee, Maroubra,
Randwick, Paddington, Double Bay,
Vaucluse, Rose Bay**

One of Sydney's most popular and competitive areas for incoming families, combining beachside living, established residential neighbourhoods and premium harbour addresses.

Housing ranges from apartments and terraces to high-end waterfront homes. The area spans from the lively beaches of Bondi to quieter family pockets and some of the city's most expensive postcodes.

Lower North Shore

**Mosman, Neutral Bay, Cremorne,
Kirribilli**

Prestigious suburbs just across the Harbour Bridge, with access to top schools.

Mosman is the most residential, with larger homes and a quieter pace. Neutral Bay and Cremorne sit slightly closer to the city, with a blend of apartments and older terrace housing. Kirribilli is the smallest – directly connected to the centre by ferry or train, but rents at the top end of the North Shore range.

Northern Beaches

**Manly, Dee Why, Seaforth,
Freshwater**

A peninsula suburb with a slower pace than much of Sydney. Manly has its own high street, restaurants, cafés and a strong local community that feels removed from the city despite ferry and bus access.

Dee Why and Brookvale are more affordable and popular with families. Road access to the city centre at peak hour is slower – many commute by ferry or the B-Line express bus.

Family Suburbs

Upper North Shore

Roseville, Lindfield, Killara, Chatswood, Gordon

A long-established family area known for larger homes, direct rail access and some of Sydney's most sought-after schools.

Roseville is quiet and village-like with good local amenities. Lindfield is known for period homes and leafy streets. Killara stands out for its wide, tree-lined avenues, generous gardens and larger detached homes. Chatswood is more urban, with major retail, dining and a direct metro connection.

Hills District

Castle Hill, Baulkham Hills, West Pennant Hills, Beecroft

The Hills District offers a more suburban version of Sydney, with larger homes, newer developments and noticeably more space for the budget.

Castle Hill is the main commercial centre, while Beecroft and West Pennant Hills feel greener and more residential. The metro has improved city access, but most households still rely heavily on driving.

City Living

City Fringe & Inner West

Surry Hills, Pyrmont, The Rocks, Balmain, Newtown, Marrickville, Leichhardt

For those who want shorter commutes or easy access to the city's food and cultural scene.

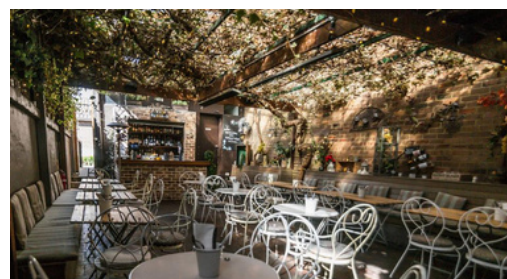
- **Surry Hills** is known for its restaurant and bar scene, while **The Rocks** offers historic streets and waterfront living beneath the Harbour Bridge.
- **Balmain** combines village character, weekend markets and harbour access, making it popular with couples and young families.
- **Newtown** is bohemian and eclectic – independent shops, restaurants, theatres and a colourful individuality that attracts younger professionals.
- **Leichhardt** retains its Italian heritage, centred around Norton Street's cafés and food shops, and offers a quieter family atmosphere.
- **Marrickville** has a café-driven cultural feel and is now directly connected to the CBD by metro in under 15 minutes, making it increasingly popular and good value.



Up and Coming

A number of suburbs are seeing growing interest as transport improves, new housing comes to market and more people look beyond Sydney's traditional relocation areas.

- **Parramatta** – increasingly chosen for larger homes, newer apartments and growing business districts outside the city centre.
- **Brookvale** – a more affordable Northern Beaches option, becoming popular with younger families and professionals.
- **Green Square** – one of Sydney's largest urban renewal areas, with modern apartments and direct transport links.
- **Crows Nest** – village atmosphere, strong dining and easier city access since the metro extension.
- **Alexandria** – a former industrial area now attracting professionals through converted spaces, cafés and proximity to both the CBD and airport.



Sydney Essentials Checklist



Essential documentation for new arrivals - what you'll need for renting, banking and utilities:



Renting

- 100 points of ID (passport, driving licence or equivalent)
- Proof of income
- Rental history and references
- Pet details (if applicable)



Banking

- Passport
 - Visa
 - Tax File Number (TFN)
 - Proof of address
- ♦ Apply for TFN asap to avoid delays



Utilities

- Passport / ID
- Proof of address
- Move-in date
- A deposit may be required without local credit history.

Good to Know

Living with Sydney Traffic

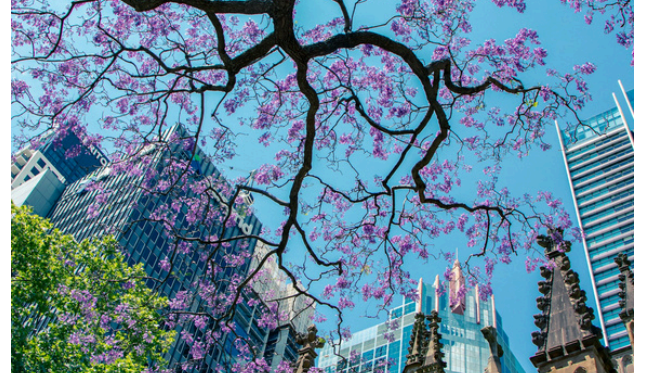
Despite its reputation as an outdoor city, Sydney has one of the world's most congested road networks at peak hour. Many seasoned residents plan their entire lives around avoiding it – choosing suburbs by train line or ferry route rather than distance.

The Hidden Cost of Driving in Sydney

Sydney's road network includes an extensive system of electronic toll roads, tunnels and motorways that are commonly used to bypass congestion. There are no toll booths, with charges automatically recorded via licence plate or an electronic tag linked to a toll account.

Sydney School Catchments

Sydney's school catchment zones are legally binding and regularly checked. Some families have lost school places after moving address mid-year. It is not a system where proximity is a rough guide – it is a hard boundary.



The 100 Point Identity Check

Australia uses a points-based identity verification system for renting, banking and other official transactions. Different documents carry different point values:

A passport scores 70 points, a driving licence 40 points, a bank statement 25 points. Applicants need to reach 100 points in total. Most new arrivals can satisfy this with a passport plus one or two supporting documents.

Outdoor Life is Not a Cliché

Sydney has over 100 beaches, 7 national parks within the metropolitan area and more than 1,000 kilometres of walking trails - all within easy reach of the city centre.

We support relocations to 150+ cities worldwide. For detailed neighbourhood guides, schooling profiles, and current market intelligence, contact **Tyler Burns**, SVP, Global Market Development

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