

WORLD'S MOST LIVEABLE CITY

Whatever kind of lifestyle you're looking for, you'll find it in Melbourne, writes **Kathy Nunn**

Melbourne has been voted the most liveable city in the world by The Economist Intelligence Unit Survey for the past three years so it is not surprising then, that this city is extremely popular as a destination. The voting panel gave Melbourne perfect scores for healthcare, education and infrastructure but the city scored highly on a range of factors.

Whatever kind of lifestyle you are looking for you can find it in Melbourne. If you want to live close to the vibrant city laneways in a warehouse apartment, in a trendy modern pad in the lofty Eureka Tower, in a Victorian Worker's cottage in a leafy suburb or in a sprawling family home with a >>

Main image, Melbourne's CBD is a mix of modern and Victorian era buildings



Above, any property with a sea view in Melbourne can exact a high price

garden to match, you will be able to find some really great options. Closer in to the city is, as with all cities, most expensive and the further you move away from the city it becomes less expensive.

CITY PROXIMITY

Almost a third of people employed in the city tend to live in the city itself or choose to live in the closest inner city councils of Boroondara, Port Phillip, and Stonnington, Yarra and Moreland.

Within these councils, younger professionals tend to choose either the CBD, Southbank or surrounding suburbs such as Port Melbourne, Prahran, Fitzroy, Richmond or Brunswick as they really value the proximity to the city and the easy access to shops, restaurants, nightlife, transport and leisure facilities.

They will often compromise on the size of the accommodation to get the location they want. It is not

There are lovely areas within walking distance of a beach which are not too expensive

necessary to have a car or your own vehicle in any of these places.

The expenses of parking and insurance make it prohibitive and trams and trains are cheap and frequent. Payment for transport is by myki card. Taxis are easily available although more expensive than taking public transport.

The city can also be divided into the area closest to the bay (the city

Flinders Street Station serves the entire metropolitan rail network



councils of Port Phillip, Bayside, Kingston, and Hobson's Bay for example) or suburbs which are more inland.

Anything with a sea view can exact a high price but there are some lovely areas within walking distance of a beach which are not too expensive.

The beaches vary from city beaches to small coves nestled

amongst rugged cliffs as you move further from the city.

BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES

Older parts of Melbourne, along the bay and in the inner east in particular, have beautiful little villages with all sorts of interesting shops and these provide for friendly and thriving communities.

Most of the villages will be close to transport, such as train or tram. The trams are slow but can be a great option in peak time traffic if the train station is not close.

The older areas have wonderful period homes and also have a slightly European feel with tree lined streets offering wonderful shade in the hot summer days and beautiful colours in the autumn.

The older the home, with more period features, then the more expensive it can get. This is something that is very surprising to newcomers from parts of the world

which have an abundance of older homes. Generally these older suburbs, each with its unique flavour, will be quite expensive and they will also have the majority of the long established private schools.

Areas such as South Yarra, Toorak, Kew, Brighton, Malvern, Ivanhoe and Camberwell fall into this category, although there are many other areas with excellent private schools. The state schools in these areas are also excellent.

Further out there are many new communities which are establishing themselves in the form of estates where homes are new and spacious, although often, there is no viable transport close by so it is important to have a car. Check pricing for car options on www.redbook.com.au.

Areas such as Sanctuary Lakes, Point Cook, Taylor's Lakes and Caroline Springs offer affordable modern housing with facilities close at hand.

These communities popular with young couples and families who value the modern feel and the space. They are often built around a lake or particular feature which makes the area attractive. To get a sense of the suburbs you can go to the relocation guides on www.eliteexecutiveservices.com.au.

BUDGET MATTERS

Whether you are renting or buying, most newcomers feel that housing is pretty expensive in Melbourne. This is true but you may find that it is possible to budget in other areas.



The stylish entrance to Flinders Street Station

The markets and Costco are great places to save on food bills, and with Melbourne's excellent reputation for culinary expertise, there are plenty of relatively inexpensive places to eat.

There are always free concerts and events around the city and this will also assist with making the most of where you live without paying through the nose.

The wonderful weather also means that even in winter it is possible to enjoy the great outdoors. Before you rent or buy anything make sure you do your homework to be certain that you are not paying too much.

Engaging a relocation consultant to help you find a rental or purchase property may be money well spent as they will have a clear idea of when you can negotiate without losing the property. Relocation consultants will most likely know of some properties not yet listed on the internet.

If you are coming without your furniture you will find that there are apartments around the city which are furnished but very few furnished houses if you need something larger.

There are great options to rent or buy furniture so don't feel stuck.. Companies such as Living Edge (www.livingedgerental.com.au) can provide long or short term rental solutions and will arrange delivery to coincide with your move in.

There are also plenty of second hand offerings through eBay and other online classifieds such www.tradingpost.com.au or www.gumtree.com.au. Also, look out for weekend garage sales where you can pick up a bargain or two.

IKEA is always a good standby if you prefer something new but you do not want to spend a fortune.

If you are not too clever at assembling you can always splash out on a handyman to put things together for you.

FINDING WORK

Where you live is influenced not only by budget but also proximity to work.

The city itself absorbs thousands of workers every day and generally the main occupations of those travelling into the city or Docklands would lie in professional, finance and insurance, scientific and technical services, and public administration and safety industries.

Manufacturing and industrial areas sit around the city and are generally in areas where newer estates have grown. It would be safe to say, however, that most of these areas would be within 45 minutes

Melbourne is a place where new ideas are embraced and people are supportive of new ventures

of the city and are easily reached by excellent roads.

If you are coming without a job but have a visa then start using your networks. Word of mouth is a great way to get opportunities and LinkedIn is also becoming increasingly used to fill vacancies.

Post your CV on sites such as www.skilledmigrantjobs.com, which is a free way of connecting you with potential employers.

Keep your eyes open for jobs on websites such as www.seek.com.au and www.careerone.com.au. Also check out the tips on the free app Location Australia and on www.aussierelocation.com.au.

A few weeks before arriving you might also reach out to recruiters who will take you more seriously when your arrival is imminent.

Melbourne is a place where new ideas are embraced and people are supportive of start-ups and new ventures. Australians are prepared



An elegant shopping arcade in Melbourne

to give people a go so don't be hesitant in coming forward.

THE WORKPLACE

The Australian workplace is usually a friendly place with lots of banter but don't be misled, Australians certainly know how to work hard!

You will find that the workplace is usually quite informal and not overly hierarchical but despite the

fact that workers will discuss things on an equal basis with their superiors there is an understanding that there are clear lines of authority. You will also find that it is important to be a team player.

Although official hours are nine to five many people take work home with them or stay late in the office. Australian workers are entitled to benefits such as superannuation to which the employer contributes, paid maternity leave, sick leave and sometimes they can get study leave.

A work life balance is important in Australia and particularly in Melbourne: after all it is a wonderful city to enjoy in your leisure time!

Kathy Nunn is a director of Elite Executive Services (www.eliteexecutiveservices.com.au) which provides home search solutions in Australia.