

GETTING TO KNOW PERTH

If you're heading for a new life in the Western Australian capital, some advance preparation before you go will help you and your family get settled there quickly, writes **Katie Lawley** and **Sarah Tester**

With so many things you will need to think about and organise on your arrival in Perth, the first few weeks can go by in a flash.

When you arrive, you will be exhausted so it's a good idea to look at booking an airport transfer in advance with a company such as Finesse Green (www.finessegreen.com.au).

If you have children they can provide child and booster seats and will provide refreshments for the journey to your accommodation.

Even if you have been here on holiday, finding the right place to settle can be daunting.

It's worth sitting down and making a list of the factors which are really important to you when deciding where you want to live, such as the distance to the beach, commuting to the CBD, school and employment opportunities and budget, then tackle each one of these on its own.

FINDING A HOME

If you are moving to Perth for the way of life, then you will want to

look at suburbs that offer easy access to coastal walks, beaches, wineries, walking and cycling tracks, National Parks and shopping. Some suburbs that offer these include Yanchep, Burns Beach, Joondalup, Woodvale, Henley Brook, Aveley, Cottesloe, Fremantle and Mandurah.

If you plan to buy a property visit www.reiwa.com.au, where for a minimal fee you can purchase market information such as suburb rental data and suburb price data to help link your housing expectations with your budget.

If you are looking at renting a property to begin with, you need to bear in mind that rental accommodation in Perth is not around for long.

Try to come to Perth as prepared as you can. If you currently have a mortgage, ask your bank to write you a reference.

Try to get hold of references from employers and also character references from any groups or charities you help out with, such as Neighbourhood Watch.

Make sure that you have current bank statements showing funds, and include copies of criminal check certificates.

All this will give the agent and landlord confidence in you as a renter. For listings of private rentals visit www.quokka.com.au or www.gumtree.com.au.

Also, look at what's currently available in specific suburbs by visiting www.realestate.com.au.

child's immunisation records before you leave the UK and bring these to Perth, along with any other health-related paperwork.

Do be aware that children may be required to have further immunisations such as hepatitis B and chicken pox.

Finding the right school for your child is an important task, and one that cannot be rushed

IF YOU HAVE KIDS

In Western Australia, if you cannot provide evidence of your child's immunisations you will not be able to register them for any form of childcare, including schooling, and you will not be entitled to Child Care Benefit.

Before you leave the UK, ask your doctor to print out your

Finding the right school for your child is an important task, and one that cannot be rushed.

As government schools in Australia work on a boundary system it may take time to find the right property in the right suburb and therefore this could delay when your children will start school.

For information on schools, visit www.det.wa.edu.au or www.privateschoolsdirectory.com.au for information on private schools.

There are lots of ways your children can make friends once you are settled. If you have children that are under school age, join a local playgroup where you can meet many other migrants in the same position as you.

Look for children's clubs where they can develop a hobby and make new friends at the same time. Great clubs include Jungle Sports, who cater for children up to age seven,

with unique programmes designed to get children involved in sport.

GET YOUR BEARINGS

Once you have ticked off the initial tasks on the list, try and organise a day trip and get to know the city you are now calling home.

There are so many fantastic things to see and do in Perth that cater for everyone. Make the first thing on your list a visit into the city to have a wander. Not only will this help you get your bearings but you will also familiarise yourself with the transport options.

Do a bit of shopping at the Hay Street and Murray Street Malls, have lunch at one of the many cafés and restaurants that line Hay Street, William Street and Murray Street.

Check out the city foreshore, with its amazing views and book a cruise with Captain Cook Cruises to the Swan Valley.

If you have children, head to Sci Tech science museum (www.scitech.org.au). It's an adults playground too with loads of fun experiments and short shows.

To get up close and personal to the native Australian wildlife, head to Caversham Wildlife Park (www.cavershamwildlife.com.au) where you can feed the kangaroos, meet the Aussie farm animals, stroke the wombat and hear talks on some of the more feared species in Australia including snakes and spiders! This will be a great educational tool for

Images (clockwise from left) an aerial view of Perth's CBD; the sun setting over Fremantle Harbour; Cottesloe Beach



ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

Here are the top things you need to do when you arrive in Perth:

- Apply for a Tax File Number (TFN) and Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Register with Medicare
- Organise your bank accounts
- Organise your driving licence
- Visit recruitment agencies
- Visit suburbs you are interested in living
- Arrange visits to see schools

your children and help them adapt to the wildlife you will come across in everyday life in Perth.

The Western Australia coastline has some of the best beaches in the world! From Mandurah in the south to Yanchep in the north, beaches are plenty but it's important to know which ones are best for families and which are more suited to activities such as surfing or swimming.

A great beach to go to with the little ones is Hillarys Boat Harbour, a man-made beach with hardly any

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current, making it a hit with the families. Yanchep Lagoon and Mettams Pools are also popular spots. Scarborough, Cottesloe, Whitfords and Trigg Beach are great for surfing, kite surfing and windsurfing.

Many of the beaches are manned by life guards in Perth. Some of the more popular beaches are Mullaloo, Quinns, Cottesloe and Secret Harbour – just remember to always swim between the flags!

The historic town of Fremantle is a perfect day out. The first town built in Perth by the convicts is home to Fremantle Prison, where you can be taken back in time through the many different tours that run throughout the day and evening. Fremantle is also home to a maritime museum, a must for any sea lover.

Combine the many funky cafes, bohemian bars and great restaurants that line the cappuccino strip, with the artsy markets that you can find here and you will have a unique place with heaps of character.



Swan Bells, a must-see tourist attraction in Perth

Company – it's Perth's hottest ocean-side venue.

Drop in and visit the Brew Crew and sample the handcrafted beers and enjoy a bite to eat from the menu featuring a range of oven-fired pizzas, flame-grilled meats, salads and desserts. There's live music all weekend.



Many social events take place at Gloucester Park race course

PERTH NIGHTLIFE

Used to a busy social life where you are from? There are some great events and evenings that cater for children too. Gloucester Park (www.gloucesterpark.com.au) in East Perth is famed for its Friday night horse racing, where hundreds of families plot up with picnic chairs and dinner in the esky on the side of the race track.

There are numerous food options as well if a picnic is not your idea of fun. Gloucester Park also organises events on a regular basis, including themed nights such as Italian Firework Night, Best of British and Chinese New Year.

Want dinner and drinks with a view? Head to the stunning Mindarie Marina and visit the stylish Indian Ocean Brewing

Then there's The Boat Tavern. Perfectly located, right on the water's edge at Mindarie Marina, it serves up relaxed oceanside dining. It's a good place to come for a family lunch, dinner or a drink with mates.

The Boat is your local live entertainment hub with a huge calendar of free events going on throughout the year, with live music every weekend and of course all the live sports you can handle. Head down there, relax, watch the boats cruise by and soak up that atmosphere. 🇺🇦

For help with your relocation to Perth, advice on suburbs to live and information about what there is to see and do there visit www.apieceofperth.com.