

Road rules



The Aussies may drive on the same side of the road as us, but there are still plenty of differences, writes *Karen Bleakley*

A uniquely Australian kangaroo road sign



In the UK, I didn't drive often. My husband and I shared a car and I only learnt to drive after having kids. Everything I needed was close by so I used to walk everywhere. Since moving to Australia I've come to rely on my car. Everything is so far apart, and in summer it gets so hot that walking isn't practical.

Although you drive on the same side of the road, there are plenty of differences to driving in Australia. Road rules can also differ between states, so it's worth reading the rules if you are planning on moving or travelling.

The thing I love about driving in north Brisbane, where we live, is that there is so much more space. In the UK, we lived in a busy town where the cycle lane was narrow and dangerous. Here, roads are wider and we have very generous cycle

a 'no U turn sign'. Other states deal with U turns differently, so be aware if you drive into another state.

There are speed restrictions around schools at certain hours – this can mean a 60 kilometres per hour limit drops to 40 kilometres per hour between

never know where the next speed check could be. Everybody I know who has moved to Australia – including my husband and I – have been sent at least one speeding ticket in their first year, and most new arrivals get hit with multiple tickets in their first year while they get

“Most new arrivals get hit with multiple tickets in their first year while they get used to the hidden speed checks”

paths. Parking spaces are larger too and, outside the city, parking is usually free.

There are other differences to driving in Queensland as well. For instance, traffic lights miss a stage – they go from red to green without any warning – and there is no red and amber phase to get you ready. You can also only park in the direction of the traffic.

There are different rules about U turns. In Queensland, you can only make a U turn at traffic lights when there is a 'U-turn permitted' sign.

At intersections or breaks in the centre of the road where there are no lights, you're allowed to do a U turn if there isn't

designated times and there can be parking restrictions too. The thing I find strange here is at an intersection controlled by a filter light, you might get the green arrow to turn but pedestrians at the crossing on the road you are turning into can also get the green light to cross at the same time, so you sometimes get half way around the corner and have to stop as there are people in the road.

The final thing to be aware of is that speed rules are taken very seriously here. Fixed speed cameras are signposted but there are often police officers doing speed checks at various (often hidden) points and they move around all the time so you

used to the hidden speed checks. It certainly makes you take care with your speed. If you get a ticket during public holidays in certain states it can result in double the points on your license (known as 'double demerits') too.

As someone who hated driving in the UK because it was always so busy, I have to say, I much prefer driving in Australia.

I do miss being able to walk everywhere though; I was much fitter before we moved! 🇺🇸

■ **Karen Bleakley helps families take the stress out of moving to Australia at www.SmartStepstoAustralia.com.**

Image: Karen Bleakley