

The cost of living



Is it more expensive to live in Australia than the UK?
Karen Bleakley weighs it all up...

Cost of living is always a hot topic of conversation in all of the online migration forums. I often see people complaining about the high cost of living in Australia and I know this scares people who haven't made the move yet. It definitely worried us before we moved too.

Some things in the shops cost more in Australia, and other things cost less. Some household bills cost less, and others more. The exchange rate moves all the time so that also makes it hard to compare as the goal posts are constantly moving.

It's not really so much about whether things cost more here though; it's about what kind of lifestyle you can achieve. Higher bills and outgoings are fine, providing your income is higher to support that.



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Image: Karen Bleakley

Where you move from in the UK and where you move to in Australia both play a big part in whether you find Australia expensive or not.

Big cities are expensive places to live no matter what country you are in. Moving from London to Sydney might not feel like such a jump, but if you move from a rural village in Lincolnshire to Melbourne, it would be a big shock – just as it would if you moved from that village into London.

Supermarket food can work out a bit more expensive in Australia – you don't get the smart price deals here that you can get in Tesco and Asda in the UK. You get used to buying things in season here. Out

of season a punnet of blueberries could cost A\$8 but in season they might only be A\$2. You just learn to adapt and shop differently.

Eating out and takeaways are much better value here. A basic takeaway pizza from a local chain might only cost A\$5 (£2.70) and while it might be smaller than ones from our old local pizza place, at that price you can afford to buy three of them instead!

As far as income potential goes, some occupations earn considerably more in Australia compared to the UK – sometimes two or three times more. For us, this means we can afford to spend more on our mortgage, and make

different lifestyle choices like running a second car and sending our kids to private school.

We are earning more in Australia but we are now spending more too. We honestly don't think about whether it is more expensive or not. We earn dollars and we spend dollars. We don't think about how that converts to pounds because it really has no relevance to our lives here. Our lifestyle in Australia is better in every way though. To me, that is all that matters. 🍷

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