

Buying a home in Sydney

Homebuyers in Sydney are spoilt for choice with the array of property styles and suburbs on offer, writes **Mary O'Brien**



A modern architect-designed luxury house in Sydney

Sydney is a great city to reside, as it suits all kinds of people. It is extremely widespread with a huge selection of beautiful beaches – perfect if you fancy surfing, boating, swimming, or just relaxing and enjoying a barbeque.

There is plenty of greenery too, and in most areas of Sydney there will usually be a park or bush reserve nearby, inevitably also offering fantastic outdoor facilities.

The properties and locations in Sydney vary so much – you just need to decide which factors are most important.

Those who fancy living close to the city, with great cafés and proximity to the beaches may want to consider an apartment or “duplex.”

If you have a large budget, there are some lovely waterside suburbs, such as Mosman, though bear in mind you could find yourself spending 10 times more than you would for a similar property in the outer suburbs. Meanwhile, the outer suburbs have plenty to offer homebuyers, with comfortable family homes, many with a swimming pool, and always a park

or school close by. Here is a brief overview of Sydney’s main suburbs...

NORTH SHORE

Sydney’s North Shore suburbs offer easy access to both beaches and parks. They generally tend to appeal to families with their mixture of family homes and some apartment buildings.

This area of Sydney includes the following suburbs: Artarmon, Avalon, Balgowlah, Chatswood, Collaroy, Crows Nest, Dee Why, Fairlight, Gladesville, Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Manly, Mona Vale, North Ryde, St Ives, Turramurra and Wahroonga.

LOWER NORTH SHORE

The Lower North Shore tends to be home to better paid professionals who like living close to the city centre and enjoying great harbour views.

It’s one of the more prestigious parts of Sydney, with some of the most luxurious properties to be found in the city. Beautiful suburbs to be found here include Cremorne, Kirribilli, McMahons

Point, Milsons Point, Mosman, Neutral Bay, and North Sydney.

INNER WEST SUBURBS

The Inner West suburbs of Sydney certainly have their fair share of large apartment buildings but they are known more for having traditional terrace houses, historic cottages, and heritage properties.

You’ll find a lively café culture in these suburbs with more of a multicultural, and community-minded feel. These suburbs include Annandale, Ashfield, Balmain, Drummoyne, Dulwich Hill, Erskineville, Five Dock, Glebe, Haberfield, Leichhardt, Marrickville, Newtown, Pyrmont, Rozelle, and Summer Hill.

EASTERN SUBURBS

Sydney’s Eastern suburbs offer a kaleidoscope of beautiful beaches, trendy bars and restaurants and bohemian culture. There is more of an arty, trendy feel to these suburbs, and they tend to attract a mixture of people, from students to extremely well-off families, celebrities and business people.

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A Victorian terraced house in inner city Paddington

Do your research!

Before moving to Sydney, there is plenty you can investigate online to help you make an informed decision about purchasing property. Make a start by checking out the following useful websites:

- www.apm.com.au Property market analysis, average prices and trends.
- www.realestate.com.au Properties for sale and rent.
- www.domain.com.au Properties for sale and rent.
- www.residex.com.au Market facts, postcode and property information.
- www.reports.rpdata.com.au Suburb profiles and property sales history.
- www.reiaustralia.com.au Market facts, consumer information and Government legislation.
- www.yourinvestmentpropertymag.com.au Great up-to-date monthly information on property.
- www.firb.gov.au Foreign Investment Review Board offers non residents permission to purchase property in Australia.
- www.abs.gov.au Australian Bureau of Statistics, for information on population growth, property and employment.
- www.whereis.com.au Great map overview of suburbs and distance to CBD.
- www.schools.nsw.edu.au/schoolfind/locator Describes the public schools in the state of New South Wales.
- www.rba.gov.au Reserve Bank of Australia, for statistics and annual reports.
- www.ato.gov.au Australian Tax Office, for tax rates, forms and policies.
- www.firsthome.gov.au Check this website to see if, as a resident of Australia, you qualify for a First Home Owner Grant, which provides a A\$7,000 (£4,517) benefit to eligible applicants.



The most exclusive house for sale in Sydney right now - 'Altona' is a harbourfront home with stunning views

You'll find a broad section of properties here, such as terrace houses, family homes near the water, apartments and luxury properties. These Eastern suburbs include Bondi Junction, Bondi Beach, Bronte, Clovelly, Coogee, Darlinghurst, Double Bay, Edgecliff, Elizabeth Bay, Paddington, Potts Point, Randwick, Redfern, Rose Bay, Surry Hills, Vaucluse, Woollahra and Woollahra.

SOUTHERN SUBURBS

Sydney's Southern suburbs are much more family-orientated and you'll find a large selection of expensive family homes that are located close to the beach. These suburbs include Brighton-Le-Sands, Maroubra, and Sans Souci.

WESTERN SUBURBS

The Western and South-West suburbs of Sydney tend to offer more affordable properties. Here you will find more lower income families with larger homes on larger blocks of land.

In the West, these suburbs include Parramatta and Blacktown. In South West, these suburbs include Revesby, Liverpool and Campbelltown, which has seen the opening of new subdivisions.

NORTH WEST SUBURBS

This part of Sydney is fantastic for families, with large houses, more land, swimming pools and many parks and walks. Many new developments are cropping up here which offer more affordable properties. With a new rail link planned for the future, this area is only

going to thrive. These suburbs include Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill, Winston Hills and new modern housing areas like Kellyville, Bella Vista, Rouse Hill.

On the outskirts is Windsor, which like it's namesake in the UK, is very traditional in its style of architecture.

HOUSE PRICES

The official population of Greater Sydney is estimated at a whopping 4,627,345, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In 2011, Sydney contained just over 20 per cent of Australia's population.

The average house price in Sydney is currently A\$642,425 (£414,349), which is higher than the average national house price of A\$536,075 (£345,904).

Property prices rose in July 2012 in Sydney by 1.2 per cent, while other state capital cities declined, by minus 2.5 per cent in Adelaide, minus 0.5 per cent in Perth and minus 0.4 per cent in Brisbane. Melbourne, was the exception, which saw prices rising to 1.4 per cent.

HOUSING PREDICTIONS

According to chief economists, Sydney housing is still overvalued and short term house prices could fall a bit further as economic uncertainty continues to impact on Europe. Other key factors include lower consumer confidence, the slow New South Wales state economy and an increase in the supply of property.

House prices can only increase in areas of affordability to the average Sydney resident, and government reports indicate that just 24 per cent of properties for sale

Average property prices

The average property prices in Sydney that are detailed below reflect their desirability. The expensive suburbs (red) benefit from being close to the CBD and the beautiful beaches, while the cheaper suburbs, while further away, can still offer you more house and land for your money.

Point Piper:	A\$8,250,000 (£5,325,480)
Vaucluse:	A\$3,340,000 (£2,155,754)
Darling Point:	A\$3,387,500 (£2,186,369)
Bellevue Hill:	A\$3,325,000 (£2,146,229)
Double Bay:	A\$3,050,000 (£1,968,408)
Baulkham Hills:	A\$620,000 (£400,135)
Bella Vista:	A\$860,000 (£554,940)
Botany:	A\$770,000 (£496,885)
Chippendale:	A\$765,000 (£493,658)
Kellyville:	A\$665,000 (£429,085)
Blacktown:	A\$375,000 (£241,970)
Windsor:	A\$375,000 (£241,970)
Liverpool:	A\$400,000 (£258,084)
Revesby:	A\$555,000 (£358,092)

in Sydney are affordable to households in the lowest 60 per cent of incomes.

SYDNEY AFFORDABILITY

According to the 2012 Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey, Sydney has the second least affordable housing market globally. Average house prices in Sydney cost 9.2 times the average household income.

Sydneysiders also appear to have some of the biggest mortgages in Australia. The average monthly mortgage repayment is A\$2,167 (£1,398), which is high compared to the national average of A\$1,800 (£1,161).

The average weekly rent in Sydney is A\$351 (£226), which is 25 per cent higher than the national average. On average, 32 per cent of households in Sydney are renters.

PURCHASING A PROPERTY

There are a variety of factors you need to consider before purchasing a property in

Sydney. Affordability is the first factor and depends on your salary and how much deposit you have for your purchase.

You also need to consider accessibility to work, with proximity to rail stations. Desirability is another factor – you may want to choose a nice, safe area near shops and offering quick access to the main freeways around Sydney.

If you have children, it is important to live in the right area to enable your child to have access to an acceptable school or close to your preferred private school.

When you found the house of your dreams, it helps if you can offer a deposit for a house. Most banks like a 20 per cent deposit, although they lend up to 95 per cent. You will also have stamp duty and legal costs to pay for.

Unless you have obtained permanent residency for Australia, before you purchase a residential property you must be approved by the Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) before making an offer on a property.



Sydney resident Mary O'Brien is a finance specialist at Downunder Mortgages Pty Ltd. She has helped many UK residents moving Down Under to Australia with finance from a wide choice of Australian banks. For more information visit www.downundermortgages.co.uk or call (free) 0800 0517177.