

Suncorp Bank's Family Friendly City Report

January 2014

Introduction

Wagga Wagga, Canberra and Albury-Wodonga have taken out the top three spots as Australia's most family friendly cities, in Suncorp Bank's second annual liveability study of the nation's 30 most populous cities.

Four capital cities (Canberra, Sydney, Hobart and Melbourne) made the top ten most family friendly index for the second year running, with new cities Mackay, Bendigo and Ballarat storming up the ladder to enter the top 10 cities for the first time. Victoria has four of the top cities while no South Australia, Western Australia or Northern Territory cities appear in the top 10.

This year's index included new indicators, road safety, street safety at night, teacher to student ratio, immunisation rates and mortgage stress. Crowded, violent, stressful, urban jungles and under serviced Eastern seaboard capitals are being overtaken by regional towns as the most family friendly cities in Australia.

Despite the populations in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane growing quickly, the Suncorp Bank Family Friendly Index has found that many regional cities have a lot to offer families.

The Suncorp Bank Family Friendly City Index monitors the most populated 30 cities in Australia and ranks them according to which city is the most family friendly across key indicators. The index examines data gathered from sources including the Australian Bureau of Statistics, My Schools website and the Public Health Information Development Unit.

While the Index analyses indicators such as Education, Safety, Health, Income, Unemployment and Mortgage stress, some notable omissions include Environment (climate and weather), Lifestyle (beaches and parks) which have not been included due to their subjective nature and a lack of consistent data for each of the 30 cities analysed.

Australia's top 10 family friendly cities 2014

Ranking	City
1	Wagga Wagga (NSW)
2	Canberra (ACT)
3	Albury-Wodonga (NSW/VIC)
4	Toowoomba (QLD)
5	Sydney (NSW)
6	Hobart (TAS)
7	Ballarat (VIC)
8	Bendigo (VIC)
9	Melbourne (VIC)
10	Mackay (QLD)

Methodology

To derive the rankings for the Suncorp Bank Family Friendly City Index each city was systematically ranked on each indicators. Each of the indicators raw sources were tallied and then ranked one to thirty, with one being the most desirable score and thirty being the least. All scores (or ranks) were totalled to form the Index with the lowest score being given the overall number one rank and considered the most family friendly city in Australia at the current time.

A note about data sources

The Suncorp Bank Family Friendly Index is based on measurements gathered through robust government quantitative data that is publicly available. The following data sources were used to obtain the index measurements.

Unemployment

- Data sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2013 quarter)
- <http://employment.gov.au/small-area-labour-markets-publication>
- Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast statistics sourced from <http://economy.id.com.au>

Schools

- Data sourced from the Australian Government's Myschool website
- Indicator took into account FTE teacher numbers of 20+ schools in the city divided by total enrolments
- <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

Mortgage stress

- Data sourced from the Social Health Atlas of Australia – October 2013
- Indicator measures families under housing mortgage stress released in May 2013
- http://www.publichealth.gov.au/data/page_6.html

Income

- Data sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics – 2011 census
- Indicator measures income of dual income family with children
- <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/quickstats?opendocument&navpos=220>

Immunisation

- Data sourced from the Social Health Atlas of Australia – October 2013
- Indicator measures full immunisation records at the age of five released in October 2013
- http://www.publichealth.gov.au/data/page_6.html

Community involvement

- Data sourced from the Social Health Atlas of Australia – October 2013
- Indicator measures persons aged 18 years and over who did unpaid voluntary work in the last 12 months through an organisation
- http://www.publichealth.gov.au/data/page_6.html

Community safety

- Data sourced from the Social Health Atlas of Australia – October 2013
- Indicator measures persons who feel very safe/safe walking alone in local area after dark
- http://www.publichealth.gov.au/data/page_6.html

Road safety

- Data sourced from the Social Health Atlas of Australia – October 2013
- Indicator measures deaths from road traffic injuries, persons aged 0 to 74 years
- http://www.publichealth.gov.au/data/page_6.html

Health

- Data sourced from the Social Health Atlas of Australia – October 2013
- Indicator measures persons with self-assessed health status of fair/poor
- http://www.publichealth.gov.au/data/page_6.html

Family Friendly Index key indicators

<p>Schools</p> <p>FTE teacher numbers by total school enrollments of 20 schools in each city (20km from center of city)</p>	<p>Mortgage stress</p> <p>Families under mortgage stress (more than 30% of weekly income)</p>	<p>Income</p> <p>Measures amount of income in a dual income family with kids</p>	<p>Unemployment</p> <p>Unemployment rate of city</p>
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<p>Immunisation</p> <p>Measures 5+ year olds with full immunisation records</p>	<p>Community involvement</p> <p>Amount of people who did unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months</p>	<p>Health</p> <p>Self-assessment of long-term health status</p>	<p>Road safety</p> <p>Deaths from road traffic accidents 0-74 years</p>	<p>Community safety</p> <p>Amount of people who feel safe in city alone at night</p>
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Unemployment – Top 10

The Northern Territory has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation and the highest economic growth. Darwin's status as the growth leader of capital city Australia remains true. The unemployment figures confirm the message that if you want a job then move to the Territory. Darwin was closely followed by Financial Services hub Sydney and surprise entrant Wagga Wagga rounding out the top three. Interestingly Wagga Wagga recorded a low unemployment rate compared to other Australian regional hubs thanks to its strong retail, health care and public administration industries.

Rank	City	Unemployment rate (June 2013)
1	Darwin	3.8
2	Sydney	3.9
3	Wagga Wagga	4.2
4	Canberra	4.3
5	Melbourne	4.4
5	Mackay	4.4
7	Geelong	4.7
8	Hobart	4.9
9	Toowoomba	5.2
10	Newcastle	5.3

Schools – Top 10

Sydney and Melbourne have the least crowded school classrooms in the country, while Toowoomba, Ballarat and Hervey Bay rate the best of the regional contenders. This driver looked at the amount of full-time teacher numbers and overlaid them with the amount of student enrolments in the school, giving an approximation of the size of school classrooms in the city.

Rank	City	FTE Teacher/Student ratio
1	Sydney	11.8
2	Melbourne	11.9
3	Adelaide	13
4	Toowoomba	13.8
5	Darwin	14.1
6	Ballarat	14.2
6	Hervey Bay	14.2
6	Rockhampton	14.2
9	Canberra	14.4
10	Brisbane	14.5

Mortgage stress – Top 10

Burnie residents have among the lowest mortgages in Australia, with regional hubs in Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland also enjoying relatively stress free mortgages. Not surprisingly, not one capital city features in the top 10, indicating the huge demand and pressure for home and units within a 20km radius of Australia's capital cities. Wagga Wagga is the only NSW city included in the top 10.

Rank	City	% of families under mortgage stress
1	Burnie	5.4
2	LaTrobe Valley	6.4
3	Rockhampton	6.9
4	Bundaberg	7
5	Bendigo	7.1
6	Hervey Bay	7.2
6	Launceston	7.2
6	Toowoomba	7.2
9	Ballarat	7.5
10	Wagga Wagga	7.6

Income – Top 10

Canberra easily outstrips other capital cities including resource booming Darwin and Perth to remain Australia’s wage capital. Residents in Canberra enjoy the highest wages in Australia with the average dual income family earning over \$3,000 a week, the only Australian city to bust through the \$3,000 mark. Most surprisingly Mackay beats state capital Brisbane and wage powerhouse Sydney in the dual income stakes, indicating the strong resource focus of jobs in the mid north Sunshine State hotspot.

Rank	City	Dual income with children
1	Canberra	3038
2	Darwin	2614
3	Perth	2564
4	Mackay	2545
5	Sydney	2537
6	Brisbane	2378
7	Mandurah	2372
8	Bunbury	2371
9	Newcastle	2349
10	Melbourne	2346

Immunisation – Top 10

Twin cities Albury/Wodonga gets the nod as having Australia’s highest immunisation rates, followed by Queensland’s Bundaberg and Victoria’s LaTrobe Valley. Perhaps the most interesting is that no capital city rates in the top 10 and is led predominately by Victorian regional areas.

Rank	City	% children fully immunised at 5 years
1	Albury-Wodonga	94.2
2	Bundaberg	93.8
2	LaTrobe Valley	93.8
4	Bendigo	93.6
5	Newcastle	93.4
6	Ballarat	93.1
6	Wagga Wagga	93.1
8	Hervey Bay	93
9	Geelong	92.4
9	Wollongong	92.4

Community involvement – Top 10

Wagga Wagga is Australia’s most socially aware city with 45.4% of its residents opting to spend their spare time volunteering for a non-profit organisation. Residents of the regional Victorian cities of Albury and Ballarat are among the top three cities most likely to give their time and energy to a charitable cause. Hobart is the only Australian capital city to make the top 10.

Rank	City	% involved in not for profit organisation
1	Wagga Wagga	45.4
2	Albury-Wodonga	44.5
3	Ballarat	44.1
4	Coffs Harbour	43.8
5	Bendigo	43.5
6	Bunbury	42.9
7	Hobart	42.3
7	LaTrobe Valley	42.3
9	Mandurah	42.2
9	Toowoomba	42.2

Community safety – Top 10

NSW regional city of Wagga Wagga takes the top spot for Australia’s safest city, having the greatest number of residents who feel comfortable walking around the city alone at night. Hobart once again rates highly and is the only capital city that features in the top 10. Interestingly, all three Tasmanian cities appear in the top 10, while cities in Western Australia, Northern Territory and South Australia do not feature at all.

Rank	City	% of people who feel safe walking alone at night
1	Wagga Wagga	54.8
2	Hobart	54.5
3	Albury-Wodonga	54
4	Launceston	53.8
5	Mackay	53.3
6	Burnie	53.2
7	Coffs Harbour	53.1
8	Ballarat	52.4
8	Bendigo	52.4
8	Townsville	52.4

Road safety – Top 10

Wagga Wagga again takes top spot this time in the road safety category. Wagga Wagga was deemed to have the safest roads in Australia followed by a host of Eastern seaboard capital cities including Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. Hobart and Perth were the only capital cities to not feature in the top 10, suggesting that regional areas generally have higher rates of deaths on Australian roads.

Rank	City	Deaths on roads per 100,000 people
1	Wagga Wagga	3.3
2	Sydney	3.4
3	Melbourne	4
4	Canberra	4.2
5	Wollongong	4.4
6	Geelong	4.6
7	Gold Coast	4.7
8	Brisbane	5
9	Coffs Harbour	5.3
10	Adelaide	5.4

Health – Top 10

Australia's Western capital Perth has the healthiest residents in Australia, closely followed by neighbouring city Bunbury adding weight to the healing benefits of the great climate and lifestyle enjoyed by Western Australians, while capital cities Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne run out the top five placegetters.

Rank	City	Self-assessed health as fair or poor per 100 people
1	Perth	13.8
2	Bunbury	14.6
3	Canberra	15.1
4	Sydney	15.3
5	Melbourne	15.7
6	Cairns	15.8
7	Mandurah	16.2
8	Brisbane	16.5
9	Hobart	16.6
10	Albury-Wodonga	16.8
10	Gold Coast	16.8
10	Townsville	16.8

