

Setting up a home in Australia



Making yourself feel at home in a foreign country can be a challenging experience. Choosing the right type of property to meet your needs, understanding what is required for setting up your new home and where to purchase all necessary items can all help you to build a home that will make you feel settled.

Remember, this is general advice only. You should always do your own research and where necessary seek out the advice of professionals to help with your circumstances.





Choosing a property type

Australia's diverse real estate market offers a wide range of property types to suit various lifestyles, budgets and personal preferences. While the location of your destination in Australia can determine your options, here are some common types of properties you could consider when choosing your new home.

House: A house is the most common and sought-after type of property, especially among families. Houses are available in nearly all Australian regions, and they benefit from having private land area. It is common in some states for houses to have a swimming pool in the back yard and as Australians are big barbecue lovers, there are many with a designated barbecue area.

Townhouse: This type of property refers to a single dwelling that stands in a row of houses each connected by a wall. This is usually multi-level. Townhouses can be a more affordable option for families and they sometimes offer shared facilities such as a swimming pool and gym.

Duplex: This semi-detached dwelling known as a duplex is a single standing house which may appear as a standard house, however, it has separate entries and is comprised of two living units with a single connecting wall between them.

Units: A unit (also called an apartment) refers to smaller properties for multiple residents living in the same building, often with multiple units (apartments) on the same level. Units are popular and a widely available option particularly in metropolitan areas and are usually considerably less expensive than other property types.

Terrace homes: Terrace homes are iconic architecture in several Australian cities. They are a common style of housing from the 19th century which are closely based on London's architecture. The design includes unique covered balconies on semi-detached properties. Today, they can be found in some capital cities mainly in Sydney where they originated, as well as some regional areas across the country.

Granny flats: The name of granny flats originated from the initial purpose of the property being dedicated to accommodating an aging parent or parents. The self-contained housing unit is a part of the main property, built within the same building or on the land owned. Granny flats are an increasingly common way to generate additional income in Australia and can be rented through a real estate agency.

Villa: Villas are usually single level homes in a small complex.

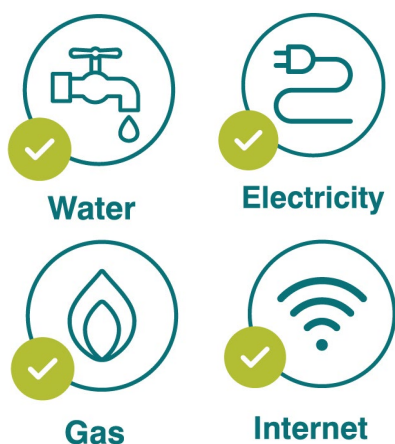
For finding the right property you might visit the well known and resourceful websites such as [Domain](https://www.domain.com.au) and [realestate.com](https://www.realestate.com.au) which offer a wide range of properties for rent or sale. Visiting the location to see what amenities are available in the local area as well as inspecting the property can help you make a considered decision.

Tip: Planning your move ahead of time can ensure a smooth transition to the new country. You might start by finding short-term accommodation like hostels, share houses, or AirBnBs. Hostels are cost-efficient and great for meeting new people, while AirBnBs offer more privacy and unique experiences. Share houses are popular among younger Australians and provide a sense of community. Platforms like [booking.com](https://www.booking.com), [flatmatefinders.com.au](https://www.flatmatefinders.com.au), and social media groups can help you find the right place.

Connecting services

In Australia, a rental agreement usually does not cover utility usage unless otherwise outlined. Before moving into a new place, you can connect necessary utilities in advance, and choose the date when you would like them to be activated. The common services that need to be connected for comfortable living are water, electricity, gas and internet. There are multiple utility providers across Australia with some limitations around rural and remote areas. Usually, you can choose between different plans suitable for your needs and budget. Many real estate agents are also affiliated with companies and can arrange utility connections on behalf of the tenant. There are also websites available where you can compare utility services and plans for free or for a small commission which is paid by the provider, such as [iSelect](#), [Finder](#) or [Compare the Market](#). To receive accurate information, you will be required to provide your new address details, moving-in date and your contact details. If you are moving to remote areas, it is important to sign up for the services in advance in case there is an installation service required and not just a re-connection of service.

Common utilities that need to be activated.



Tip: Some providers offer discounts when you bundle different services they offer together. For example, you can choose the same provider for your internet and phone plan or electricity and gas as single provider services.

Purchasing home appliances and home decoration

Depending on your budget, the location of the property and personal preferences, the Australian home appliance market offers a wide range of products for everyone.

At the beginning of your setting up a home journey you might consider starting off with necessary items such as a fridge, washing machine and bed, then complete it with decorative details that make your space feel like your home.

When prioritising expenses, you might consider the location of the property you are moving into. Some areas might require heating or cooling solutions that must be taken into account. For example, the temperature during winter nights in Victoria can drop to minus two degrees celsius which will require you to equip your property with additional appropriate heating such as portable heaters, electric blankets etc. On the other hand, the average temperature in Darwin in summer season oscillates between 30-33 degrees Celsius. In some states and territories there are also minimum rental standards pertaining to energy efficient heating and cooling that properties must adhere to.

The home appliances market is provided for by some of the big retailers in Australia. You can also compare prices of products and read the reviews and buying guides on the popular independent website, [choice](#).

Australians take pride in finding eco-solutions available on the market. Some products sold in retail stores including fridges, freezers, televisions, and washing machines must display an energy rating label. The energy rating label is designed to help customers make informed decisions about the product. Using the scale from one to six on the label, products showing more stars means the less energy it consumes which effectively influences the cost of its usage.



Once you have furnished your place with the necessary appliances and items, you can focus on decorating it your way and making it reflect your style so that it feels like home. Be aware that in Australia, usually tenants are not allowed to make changes to the physical appearance or structure of their rental property without permission. Home decor is also widely available in the Australian retail market. A variety of products can be found among well-loved Australian retail stores offering cost-effective decorating and essentials solutions for your home, as well as higher-end department stores.

Another alternative is buying furniture and other furnishings and homeware at second-hand, opportunity (op) shops or charity shops such as [St Vincent de Paul](#) or [the Salvation Army](#). There are usually one or two shops of these kinds in each suburb. You may be able to find unique items that can add a different character or feel to your dwelling.

Tip: Rental properties are sometimes supplied with home appliances such as a washing machine or fridge. They usually will have cooking facilities like a stove top and oven but not a microwave. You might check with the real estate agent for what is included in the rental, including what sort of heating and cooling system the apartment is equipped with. In some locations heating or cooling facilities in your residence may be a significant consideration.



Mail redirection

It is important to keep your address updated at all times. Whether you are moving from overseas or interstate, your residential address must be up to date. Some of the main services where it is crucial to keep that information accurate are banking, superannuation, tax, car insurance, drivers licence and car registration. If you are moving interstate, it is important to check with the relevant authorities how much time you have to update your details before you are penalised i.e. you receive a fine.

Australia Post offers mail redirection services. With a monthly subscription, you can forward all incoming mail and packages to your new address. This could be a convenient option to ensure no items are lost while you update other providers with your change of address. When applying for mail re-direction, you will be required to provide proof of identity and you can choose up to a 12-month redirection period.



Engaging with local community

An important step in making yourself feel like home is to connect with your new local community. There are usually plenty of different types of groups that you can join and meet new people in your area. You might consider starting with visiting your local community centre and library or finding out who the local council is and subscribing to their electronic newsletter. These places often offer resources and classes on a regular basis dedicated to their new international community members. Attending local events and festivals can also help you to get to know the people in your community better. You might also consider engaging in volunteering, bringing a positive impact and meeting new people.

Checklist for moving into a new place in Australia

- ☐ I have scanned and prepared all necessary documentation from my home country that might be required in Australia.
- ☐ I have translated necessary documents (if applicable).
- ☐ I have connected utility services.
- ☐ I have confirmed a key collection date.
- ☐ I have purchased all necessary appliances and organised delivery.
- ☐ I have arranged the insurance policies I need.
- ☐ I have set up mail redirection.
- ☐ I have arranged school enrolment for my children.
- ☐ I have checked that pets are allowed in my rental and arranged pet transport.
- ☐ I have scheduled and booked deep cleaning services.