

Australia - New South Wales Educational – November 2014



Here is some useful trivia....The UK can fit 3.5 times into Australia, it is a vast country and the key to a successful trip down under is taking good advice. I have just returned from an educational visit to Sydney & the surrounding areas with colleagues visiting Perth, Cairns, Ayers Rock, Brisbane and Melbourne, I believe Westway Travel are in a position to give quality advice.

Typically clients spend 3 to 4 nights in Sydney and this report will show that if you have the time you should spend longer in New South Wales as there are many great places to visit within 3 hours of Sydney.

There are many flight routes to choose from when travelling to Australia. I think you need to ask yourself what's more important, the most direct route which is British Airways with a touchdown in Singapore, the most reasonable which is normally Malaysia Airlines via Kuala Lumpur, or by your preferred stopover location and the most popular stops are Singapore/Hong Kong/Bangkok. I travelled with Emirates and Qantas whose schedules allow for a choice of stopovers including Dubai. The service was good and I would recommend it

I would like to give you an insight into the places I have experienced and this will then help us to plan what's most important to you in your trip 'Down under'.

Sydney

Sydney is a vibrant city with so much to see and do and a must is The Sydney Opera House and if you are game, the Sydney Bridge Climb.

Getting to The Rocks/Circular Quay from Sydney airport can be organised 2 ways, the most direct is a taxi and one way is approx \$50. The second is by rail, there is a direct route into the city which costs approx \$16 one way and from there a 10 minute walk into Circular Quay. Shuttle services are unreliable and buses only offer an indirect service into the city, so I would not suggest them.

There are two main areas I recommend in Sydney. The Rocks near Circular Quay

I stayed at The Old Sydney Holiday Inn

www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/gb/en/sydney/sydg/hotel/detail

Shown below, with great views of Sydney Harbour Bridge



The Rock, Circular Quay is definitely the most popular & convenient way to see Sydney at its best, you are right in the middle of all the action!! Sydney Harbour and Opera house a short walk away. With a more central position the cost of hotels does increase. Alternatively consider Darling harbour, there are a few unique selling points, the harbour area has a great selection of restaurants and to try and promote the area, they provide a spectacular firework display every Friday/Saturday evening. Also the hotels are more reasonable and the main reason for this is Circular Quay/The Rocks is a 30 minute walk away or 10 minutes in a taxi. So if you are only here for a few days I definitely would always choose The Rocks/Circular Quay for my proposed stay.

Ferries

Can there be a better way to travel around one of the most beautiful harbour cities, than by ferry? There are regular ferry services to Manly, Sydney Olympic Park, Taronga Zoo, plus many other locations. This certainly beats jumping in a cab!

Things to do in Sydney



A trip to Sydney would not be complete without doing The Sydney Opera House and The Sydney Harbour Bridge! Sydney Opera House was phenomenal... let us make time in your schedule to take in one of the spectacular plays or Opera performances at The Sydney Opera House, I guarantee you, it will leave a lasting impression. Afterwards why not have lunch or dinner at The Opera Kitchen, it's next door to the opera house, it's absolutely buzzing, the food is excellent and the views over the harbour are beautiful. Sydney Harbour Bridge climb is a must and I will mention more about this later on.



Another unique view of Sydney, if you find the bridge climb is not for you is The Sydney Tower Eye.

<http://www.sydneytowereye.com.au/?gclid=CKvhhuWTvsICFUWWtAodYFUATQ>

This is the tallest structure in Sydney, with 360- degree panoramic views across the skyline and this gives you a completely different perspective to that of the Bridge climb.



Bonza Bike Tours <https://www.bonzabiketours.com/sydney/home.php>

gives you the chance to see Sydney from the ground looking up!! I can book this for you, at a time/date to suit you it lasts 1.5 hours approximately and is a great way to see the city instead of a taxi ride!!!



Taronga Zoo <http://taronga.org.au/taronga-zoo> is only 12 minutes by ferry into breathtaking Sydney harbour. To make your visit that much special, let Westway Travel book an Aboriginal Discovery Tour they will take you on a journey through Taronga as you hear stories of Australian wildlife told through the perspective of an Aboriginal guide, with tales of their shared history with the animals and land.



Bondi Beach



25 minutes from Taronga Zoo takes you to Bondi Beach.

Bondi Beach is a beautiful iconic part of Sydney with crystal clear water's and good waves for surfing. There are lots of great places to eat and drink at either end of the price spectrum. For lunch I recommend 'The Bucket List restaurant' for the best Fish and Chips I have ever tasted!!!



Ever Fancied trying surfing?????



I can arrange your own private surf lesson, right on Bondi Beach....<http://letsgosurfing.com.au/>

Although I never got the chance to visit Manly Beach, it's thought to be Sydney's favorite beach location, with a more casual feel, only 30 minutes by ferry from Circular quay.

I stayed in a great apartment complex in Bondi Beach The Adina

<http://www.tfehotels.com/brands/adina-apartment-hotels/adina-apartment-hotel-bondi-beach/?gclid=CPqigKbgvclCFcjHtAod6BUATw> it's close to all the action, situated on Hall Street, Bondi's hip strip, the hotel has the area's trendiest restaurants, cafes on the doorstep.



Before you set off the next day, head a few doors down to 'Bills' famous for the best scrambled eggs and hotcakes in town. <http://www.bills.com.au/#bondi>



How best to end a trip to New South Wales.....

Climbing Sydney Harbour Bridge - <http://www.bridgeclimb.com/#your-arrival>



I did the bridge climb and I can honestly say this was the highlight of my trip.

The bridge climb cost's from \$148 per adult and lasts approx 2.5 hours.

This is an incredible experience that you should tick off your 'bucket list'!!!

Why not finish your holiday on a high.....let me secure you a booking on the Bridge climb today.

Blue Mountains

The journey to Blue Mountains will take approx 2.5 Hours and from Sydney you can either visit as a day trip or I would suggest a 2 night stay in The Blue Mountains. The scenery is breathtaking....

You can visit Scenic World, a great day out for all - <http://www.scenicworld.com.au/>

Listed below are the activities you can do whilst there:

I recommend to stop en-route at The Featherdale Wildlife Park, <http://www.featherdale.com.au/> here you can see all the animals you read about, Koala's, Kangaroo's and Tasmanian Devils!!!



Railway (Steepest)



Cableway



Walkway



Skyway



I stayed at Lilianfels <https://www.lilianfels.com.au/> in The Blue Mountains. This hotel reminded me of the TV show The Waltons and their family home, but definitely more classic and elegant!!



This hotel is right in the heart of The Blue Mountains, so it's all about the views and scenery and complete tranquility...

Hunter Valley



Less than two hours drive north of Sydney is one of Australia's best-known wine-growing regions, you can visit either as a day trip or with an overnight from Sydney or better still combine Sydney, The Hunter Valley with time in the Blue Mountains

[Hunter Valley](#) is recognized for its rich agricultural land the area became the focus of an emerging wine industry in the 1820s. Now home to more than 150 [wineries](#), the Hunter Valley draws visitors from around Australia and the world.

I believe the best way to see Hunter Valley is on a tour, whatever your taste or preference, Westway Travel will find a tour to suit your needs. Taking a tour is an excellent way to experience everything that is on offer, while learning more about the area.

I also think there is more to Hunter Valley than Wine Tasting. Take a look at <http://www.hunterresort.com/>

This resort appeals to everyone, with exciting activities like Segway, horse riding, cooking schools and even Hot Air Ballooning. Recently Hunter Valley itself has hosted a Rolling Stones concert, so it really does appeal to all walks of life..

I recommend staying a couple of nights @ Peppers Guesthouse in Hunter Valley, <http://www.peppers.com.au/guest-house/> to take in the Wine tasting and just to relax in the resort surroundings. Peppers Guesthouse is a hotel not to be missed!!! a contemporary style guesthouse in luxury surroundings.



I was amazed to see a family of Kangeroo's roaming the grounds at the back of the property. What a Totally Awesome experience!! Apparently this is a regular occurrence. It reminded me of a Kenya safari encounter with wild animals..



If you prefer to stay in a more family friendly property, a great choice is <http://www.crowneplazahuntervalley.com.au/> Here you have a choice of accommodation from standard rooms to Villa's with space. The hotel offers Kid's clubs and a Nanny service with a wealth of onsite facilities for the whole family to enjoy.

Port Stephens

Port Stephens is the undisputed dolphin capital of Australia with between 150 and 200 resident dolphins calling the local waters home. I would add this to a tour of the area or make it a must stop destination if driving north to Brisbane



Moonshadow Cruises offers a wide range of memorable cruising experiences around Port Stephens and Newcastle harbour. <http://www.moonshadow.com.au/>

My suggestion would be to take half a day trip and to the Dolphin watch cruise, if you are lucky you get to see dolphins in the wild.

Westway Travel can arrange these trips for you and many others to give you the best experience.

Port Stephens is also known for its wonderful beaches. There are 26 golden sandy beaches, offering swimming, snorkeling and kayaking. Ocean beaches are sublime, great for surfing and beach walks. Don't miss One Mile Beach and Box Beach if you're an experienced surfer.

Port Stephens is an idyllic beach getaway. Freshly-caught seafood, local wineries and waterside, alfresco dining are available at cafes and restaurants at [Nelson Bay](#) and [Tea Gardens](#).

The Anchorage Hotel Port Stephens pictured below <http://www.anchorageportstephens.com.au/> is a boutique resort offering premium accommodation and a wide range of recreational facilities. Overlooking the Anchorage Marina, Corlette Beach and the unspoilt waters of Port Stephens, This is a great destination to combine with a busy city.



Sand Dunes Adventure

The Sand boarding adventures was 1 hour 40 minutes from Hunter Valley and so exhilarating...

It's a great experience, with a little bit of fun and excitement rolled into one!!

<http://www.sandduneadventures.com.au/sand-dunes-port-stephens-quad-biking/quad-bike-tours-nsw/>



Ramada Resort Shoal Bay – Port Stephens

Ramada Resort Shoal <http://www.ramada.co.uk/hotels/australia/shoal-bay-port-stephens/ramada-resort-shoal-bay/hotel-overview> has to be seen to be believed. Overlooking white sand shores, pristine sparkling waters and unspoiled National Parklands, this is a picture-perfect scene, worthy of a postcard. As part of the Port Stephens coast, Shoal Bay is renowned for its stunning natural beauty and offers many water-based activities. Another advantage to this property are the rooms, they offer 1/2/3 bedroom apartments, so they can cater for large parties.



Just 5 minutes in a cab, takes you to The Little Beach Boathouse restaurant is in a great location, right on the waterfront. Offering a casual but great atmosphere with good food & service. For dessert I recommend the Chocolate Terrine it was mouth watering!! Let Westway book you a table..

Summary

I hope I have shown you a lot of what New South Wales has to offer. The most memorable parts of my trip were the iconic sights in Sydney, The fantastic Scenery in the Blue Mountains and the amazing beaches and of course the incredible cuisine... Yes you can stay for 3 nights in the City, but I would encourage you to get out and see the rest. The best way is to rent a car, the drive is easy and you will experience so much more and get a real feel for Australian life

My name is Louise Kewell and I am based at the Wickford office (01268 735301) So come and have a chat with me and let me help you plan your trip of a lifetime