

TRANSPORT

Sydneyers love to complain about their public transport system but visitors should find it surprisingly easy to get around. A car is more of a hindrance than an asset to exploring most of the areas covered in this book. Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

AIR Airlines

Virgin Blue (☎ 13 67 89; www.virginblue.com.au), Qantas and Qantas' budget alternative, **Jetstar** (☎ 131 538; www.jetstar.com.au), have frequent flights to other capital cities within Australia, while **Rex** (Regional Express; ☎ 13 17 13; www.regionalexpress.com.au), **Air Link** (☎ 6884 2435; www.airlinkairlines.com.au) and **Aeropelican** (☎ 13 13 13; www.aeropelican.com.au) connect smaller centres.

For international flights to Sydney, try the following:

Air New Zealand (Map pp62–3; ☎ 8248 0030; www.airnewzealand.com.au; 18th fl, 264 George St, City)

British Airways (Map pp62–3; ☎ 1300 767 177; www.britishairways.com; 19th fl, 259 George St, City)

Emirates (☎ 1300 303 777; www.emirates.com)

Japan Airlines (Map pp62–3; ☎ 9272 1100; www.jal.co.jp/en; 14th fl, 201 Sussex St, City)

Qantas (Map p54; ☎ 13 13 13; www.qantas.com; 10 Bridge St, City)

Singapore Airlines (Map pp62–3; ☎ 9350 0100; www.singaporeair.com; 17 Bridge St, City)

Thai Airways (☎ 1300 651 960; www.thaiair.com)

United Airlines (Map pp62–3; ☎ 9292 4111; www.unitedairlines.com.au; 151 Clarence St, City)

Virgin Atlantic (☎ 1300 727 340; www.virgin-atlantic.com)

For other international airlines, see www.sydneyairport.com.au (click on 'Flight Information').

Airport

Sydney's **Kingsford Smith Airport** (☎ 9667 9111; www.sydneyairport.com.au), 10km south of the city centre, is Australia's busiest airport, taking in flights from all over the country and the world. The international and domestic terminals are a 4km bus trip apart on either side of the runway. Flights cease between 11pm and 5am due to noise restrictions.

Smarte Carte (☎ 9667 0926; suitcase 24hr \$11; ☎ 6am–9.30pm) run a left-luggage service in both the domestic and international terminals. There are ATMs and **bureaux de change** (☎ 6am–11pm) in both terminals.

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor transport generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

GETTING INTO TOWN

One of the easiest ways to get from the airport into the city centre is with a shuttle company. These take you straight to your hotel or hostel and cost \$9 to \$12. All go into the city centre; some reach surrounding suburbs and beach destinations. Services include **Sydney Airporter** (☎ 9666 9988; www.kst.com.au; one-way/return \$10/17) and **Super Shuttle** (☎ 1300 765 685; www.supershuttle.com.au).

Airport Link (www.airportlink.com.au; one-way \$13) is a train line which runs to and from city train stations and the domestic and international terminals every 10 to 15 minutes. Trains run from approximately 5am to midnight daily. Tickets can be purchased as part of a TravelPass (p218).

For the cheapest option to Bondi via the cheapest (albeit slowest) route, take the 400 bus (\$4.60, one hour) to Bondi Junction, then the 380, 381 or 382 to the beach.

Taxi fares from the airport are approximately \$30 to \$40 to Circular Quay and \$20 to \$30 to Central. A slew of car-rental booths will greet you after you exit immigration (see p219).

BICYCLE

From the back of a bike (p174), Sydney's traffic can be scary. The best spots to get some spoke action are **Centennial Park** (p83), **Sydney Olympic Park** (p117) and **North Head** (p109). Helmets are compulsory. Many cycle-hire shops require a hefty deposit on a credit card. See also Skater HQ and Manly Blades (p175).

Centennial Park Cycles (☎ 9398 5027; www.cyclehire.com.au; 50 Clovelly Rd, Randwick; per hour/day/week \$12/35/85; ☎ 8.30am–5.30pm; ☎ 339) Also have a stand in the centre of Centennial Park and at Sydney Olympic Park (both open 9am to 5pm).

Favourite Cycles (Map p110; ☎ 9977 4590; 22 Darley Rd, Manly; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Wed & Fri, 9am–7pm Thu, 9am–5pm Sat, 10am–4pm Sun; per hour/day \$9/22; 🚲 Manly)

Inner City Cycles (Map pp100–1; ☎ 9660 6605; 151 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; per day/week \$33/88; ☎ 9.30am–6pm Mon–Wed & Fri, 9.30am–7pm Thu, 9.00am–4pm Sat, 11am–3pm Sun; ☎ 431-434) Convenient access to the city and to Central Station.

There's no charge for taking a bike on CityRail trains, except for during peak hours (6am to 9am and 3.30pm to 7.30pm Monday to Friday) when you will need to purchase a child's ticket for the bike. Bikes are allowed free on Sydney's ferries, which are equipped with bicycle racks (first come, first served). They're not permitted on buses.

BOAT Ferries

Sydney's **ferries** (☎ 131 500; www.sydneyferries.info) provide the most enjoyable way of getting around and have a pretty good reputation as

far as reliability, cleanliness and flotation go. Many people use ferries to commute, so there are frequent connecting bus services. Some ferries operate between 6am and midnight, although ferries servicing tourist attractions keep shorter hours. Popular places accessible by ferry include Darling Harbour, Balmain and Parramatta to the west; McMahons Point, Kirribilli, Neutral Bay, Cremorne, Mosman, Taronga Zoo and Manly on the North Shore; and Darling Point, Double Bay, Rose Bay and Watsons Bay in the Eastern Suburbs.

There are three kinds of ferry: regular STA ferries, fast JetCats that go to Manly (\$8.20), and RiverCats, which traverse the Parramatta River to Parramatta (\$7.70). All ferries depart from Circular Quay. At Wharf 4 you'll find the **ferry information office** (Map p54; ☎ 9207 3170; ☎ 7am–5.45pm Mon–Sat, 8am–5.45pm Sun), near the ticket booths. The standard single fare for most regular harbour ferries is \$5.20, although making the longer trip to Manly costs \$6.40.

If you plan on taking several ferry rides and are keen to save a few bucks, check out the boxed text on p218.

Water Taxis

Watertours (☎ 9211 7730; www.watertours.com.au) has cute yellow water taxis with rates based on zones. A trip to the Shark or Rodd Island (p107) will cost \$60 plus \$10 per head.

BUS

Sydney's local bus network extends to most suburbs. Fares depend upon the number of 'sections' you pass through; tickets range from \$1.70 to \$5.60, but most jaunts cost \$2.90.

Special discount passes (see [below](#)) will save you big bucks. **Sydney Buses** (☎ 131 500; www.sydneybuses.info) have an excellent website with electronic route planners, route maps and information.

Regular buses run between 5am and midnight, when Nightrider buses take over. During peak hour, buses get hideously crowded and sometimes fail to pick up passengers at major stops if they're full. Bus 380 (going to or coming from Bondi) should be avoided by claustrophobes on sunny weekend days.

The major starting points for bus routes are Circular Quay, Argyle St in Millers Point, Wynyard Park, Queen Victoria Building and Railway Sq (near Central Station). Most buses head out of the city on George or Castlereagh Sts, and take George or Elizabeth Sts coming in. Pay the driver as you enter, or dunk your prepaid ticket in the green ticket machines by the door.

At Circular Quay there's a **TransitShop** (Map p54; cnr Alfred & Loftus Sts; ☎ 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-5pm Sat & Sun) which sells passes, along with offering bus information. There are other TransitShops at Wynyard Park (on Carrington St), the Queen Victoria Building and Railway Sq.

All long-distance bus services operate from the **Sydney Coach Terminal** (Map p72; ☎ 9281 9366; Eddy Ave, City; ☎ 6am-10pm), which is located underneath Central Station. Major bus operators include **Greyhound** (☎ 9212 1500; www.greyhound.com.au), **Premier** (☎ 13 34 10; www.premiers.com.au) and **Murrays** (☎ 13 22 59; www.murrays.com.au).

TRANSPORT DEALS

There's money to be saved by investigating the confusing array of travel discounts available; try calling ☎ 131 500 or visiting www.131500.com.au.

TravelPasses provide the best value, offering a week's unlimited travel on the regular buses, trains and ferries. There are several colour-coded grades; the **Red TravelPass** (\$33) gets to most tourist destinations, the **Green TravelPass** (\$41) includes Manly and Olympic Park.

The **SydneyPass** (www.sydneypass.info; adult/child/family three days \$110/55/275, five days \$145/70/360, seven days \$165/80/410) is a pricey option for tourists who want to do it all in a short period of time, offering unlimited travel for a set number of days within an eight-day period on all buses, trains (as far as the Inner West), ferries, Explorer hop on/off buses and three short harbour cruises.

The **Daytripper** (adult/child \$15.40/7.70) covers an unlimited day on all buses, ferries and trains you're likely to need.

Consider the TravelTen or FerryTen tickets if you're likely to be going backwards and forwards between the same stops by bus or ferry.

Several transport-plus-entry tickets are available from Circular Quay, which work out cheaper than catching a ferry and paying entry separately. They include the **ZooPass** (adult/child \$39/21) and the **AquariumPass** (adult/child \$33/17).

CAR

Automobile Associations

The **National Roads & Motorists Association** (NRMA; Map pp62-3; ☎ 13 11 22; www.nrma.com.au; 74 King St, City; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri; 📍 Wynyard) provides 24-hour emergency roadside assistance, road maps, travel advice and insurance, and discounted accommodation. It has reciprocal arrangements with the other state associations and similar organisations overseas – bring proof of membership with you.

Driving & Parking

It's best to avoid driving in central Sydney if you possibly can. The city has an extensive, confusing one-way street system, parking sucks (even at hotels!), parking inspectors are everywhere and tow-away zones are common and have proved to be good revenue raisers. Having a car in Sydney can be like having an expensive anchor around your neck. On the other hand, a car is a great way to get to the far reaches of the city and for day trips (p200).

Australians drive on the left-hand side of the road and the minimum driving age (unassisted) is 18 years of age. Overseas visitors are permitted to drive with their domestic driving licences for up to three months from arriving in the country, but must obtain a New South Wales driving licence after that. Speed limits in Sydney are generally 60km/h (50km/h in some built-up areas), rising to 100km/h or 110km/h on freeways. It is the law that seat

belts must be worn, and the use of hand-held mobile phones is prohibited.

The blood-alcohol limit of 0.05% is enforced with random breath-checks and severe punishments. If you're in an accident (even if you didn't cause it) and you're over the alcohol limit, your insurance will be invalidated. For more information on road rules see www.rta.nsw.gov.au.

Private car parks are expensive, costing on average around \$15 per hour, and even street parking can eat up your coins, at a rate of about \$2.20 to \$4.40 per hour. Public car parks are signposted: look for the large white 'P' on a blue background. Many maps indicate with a 'P' where you can park your car. See also the **Yellow Pages** under parking stations and the transport section of each area in the Neighbourhoods chapters.

Hire

Car rentals are affordable and relatively consistent with US and European rates. Prices can vary widely depending on time of year and demand, but booking online can sometimes provide savings (as can renting for a longer period). Check the small print on your rental agreement to see exactly where you can take the car (some firms don't allow driving on dirt roads) and what your insurance covers. Also check on any age restrictions.

Avis (☎ 136 333; www.avis.com.au), **Budget** (☎ 13 27 27; www.budget.com.au), **Europcar** (☎ 1300 131 390; www.europcar.com.au), **Hertz** (☎ 133 090; www.hertz.com.au) and **Thrifty** (☎ 1300 367 227; www.thrifty.com.au) all have desks at the airport, and some have offices in the city centre (mostly on William St). Avis and Hertz also provide hand-controlled cars for disabled travellers. The **Yellow Pages** lists many other car-hire companies, some that specialise in renting near-wrecks at rock-bottom prices – always read the fine print on your rental agreement carefully if you decide on this option. An excellent and reasonably priced local agency is **Bayswater Car Rental** (Map p78; ☎ 9360 3622; www.nobirds.com.au; 180 Williams St, Kings Cross; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat, 9-11.30am Sun; 📍 Kings Cross).

For motorbike hire, try Bikescape (p226).

Toll Roads

The Harbour Tunnel and Harbour Bridge both impose a southbound toll of \$3; if you're heading from the North Shore to the eastern

suburbs, it's much easier to use the tunnel. The bridge still takes cash, but the tunnel requires an **RTA E-Toll tag or pass** (www.rta.nsw.gov.au) or an **E-Way tag** (☎ 1300 555 833; www.tollpay.com.au) – electronic payment devices that attach to your windscreen. If you're on a short trip to the city, it's most convenient to buy a pass for each trip rather than going to the trouble of organising a tag.

The Eastern Distributor (cutting from Randwick to Woolloomooloo) imposes a northbound toll of \$4.50. The overpriced **Cross City tunnel** (☎ 9033 3999; www.crosscity.com.au; east or west \$3.50) connects Darling Harbour to Rushcutters Bay. You'll need an electronic tag to use it (or you can contact them within 24 hours of crossing to arrange payment).

METRO LIGHT RAIL/MONORAIL

The **Metro Light Rail** (MLR; ☎ 8584 5250; www.metrolightrail.com.au; single trip \$3-4, day pass \$8.50) operates every 10 to 15 minutes (every 30 minutes after midnight) between Central Station and Pyrmont via Darling Harbour and Chinatown. The service continues to Lilyfield via the Fish Market, Wentworth Park, Glebe, Jubilee Park and Rozelle Bay, but only from 6am to midnight. Pay the operator onboard.

The **Monorail** (☎ 9285 5600; www.monorail.com.au; single/day-pass \$4.50/9; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Thu, 7am-midnight Fri & Sat, 8am-10pm Sun) is more of a tourist attraction, circling Darling Harbour and linking it to the bottom half of the city. Shuttles come by every three to five minutes, and the full loop takes about 14 minutes.

TAXI

Taxis are easily flagged down in the city centre and the inner suburbs, except for 'changeover' time (3pm and 3am) when they all vanish. All taxis are metered and Sydney taxi drivers won't usually rip you off, but don't expect them to know where you're going. We've had to direct drivers to the Opera House! If they're unsure get them to turn off the meter while they check the street directory.

Fallfall is \$2.90, and the metered fare is \$1.68 per kilometre. There's a 20% surcharge between 10pm and 6am, and additional charges for heavy luggage (over 25kg), tolls and a radio booking fee (\$1.50). For more

on the taxi system in Sydney check out www.nswtaxi.org.au.

The four big taxi companies offer a reliable service:

Legion Cabs ☎ 13 14 51

Premier Cabs ☎ 13 10 17

RSL Cabs ☎ 9581 1111

Taxis Combined ☎ 13 33 00

TRAIN

Sydney has a vast suburban rail network and frequent services, making trains much quicker than buses. You can reach practically anywhere within the CBD by train, but lines do not extend to the northern and eastern beaches, Balmain or Glebe. Trains run from

around 5am to around 1am (check timetables for your line for early or late services). As a rough guide, a short trip on a **CityRail** (☎ 131 500; www.cityrail.info) train will cost you \$2.40. After 9am Monday to Friday and any time on Saturday and Sunday, you can buy an off-peak return ticket for not much more than a standard one-way fare.

Central Station (p75) has an **information kiosk** (🕒 6am-10pm) near platforms four and five. All long-distance train services arrive and depart from this station. Book tickets through the **Countrylink Travel Centre** (☎ 13 22 32; www.countrylink.info; 🕒 6.15am-8.45pm) near platform one. You can get discounts of up to 50% with two weeks' notice. Countrylink has another office at **Circular Quay** (🕒 9.30am-3.30pm Mon-Fri), and you can also book online.

British Consulate General (Map p54; ☎ 9247 7521; 16th fl, Gateway Bldg, 1 Macquarie Pl, City)

Canadian Consulate General (Map p54; ☎ 9364 3000; 5th fl, 111 Harrington St, City)

French Consulate General (Map pp62–3; ☎ 9261 5779; 26th fl, 31 Market St, City)

German Consulate General (Map pp84–5; ☎ 9328 7733; 13 Trelawney St, Woolahra)

Japanese Consulate General (Map pp62–3; ☎ 9231 3455; 34th fl, 52 Martin Pl, City)

New Zealand High Commission (Map pp62–3; ☎ 8256 2005; 10th fl, 55 Hunter St, City)

US Consulate General (Map pp62–3; ☎ 9373 9200; 59th fl, MLC Centre, 19–29 Martin Pl, City)

For others see Consulates & Legations in the [Yellow Pages](#) (www.yellowpages.com.au).

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

When entering Australia you can bring most articles in free of duty, provided that customs is satisfied they're for personal use and that you'll be taking them with you when you leave. There's a duty-free quota per person of 2.25L of alcohol (if you're over 18), 250 cigarettes (ditto) and dutiable goods up to the value of \$900 (\$450 if you're under 18). Amounts of more than A\$10,000 cash must be declared. As these values will change from time to time, it's wise to check current regulations by contacting the [Australian Customs Service](#) (☎ 6275 6666; www.customs.gov.au).

Two issues need particular attention: one is illegal drugs – don't bring any in with you; two is animal and plant quarantine – declare all goods of animal or vegetable origin and show them to an official. Authorities are anxious to prevent pests and diseases getting into the country. Fresh food and flowers are also unpopular, and if you've recently visited farmland or rural areas, it might pay to scrub your shoes before you get to the airport.

Weapons and firearms are either prohibited or require a permit and safety testing. Other restricted goods include products made from protected wildlife species, non-approved telecommunications devices and live animals.

When you leave, don't take any protected flora or fauna with you. Customs comes down hard on smugglers.

DISCOUNT CARDS

The [See Sydney & Beyond Card](#) (☎ 1300 661 711; www.seesydneycard.com.au) offers admission to a wide range of Sydney's attractions including sightseeing tours, harbour cruises, museums, historic buildings and wildlife parks. One-/two-/three-/seven-day cards cost \$65/119/149/209 and are available online or at the Sydney Visitor Centre (p229). The two-/three-/seven-day cards are also available with public transport included for \$159/205/275.

The Historic Housing Trust's Ticket Through Time is a must for history buffs; see p65 for details.

There are also a number of transport discounts available in Sydney; see p218 for details.

ELECTRICITY

Standard voltage throughout Australia is 220 to 240 volts AC (50Hz). Plugs are flat three-pin types. Converters for US, European and Asian configurations can be found in airports, outdoors stores, hardware stores, luggage shops and some pharmacies.

EMERGENCY

In the event of an emergency, call ☎ 000 to contact the police, ambulance and fire authorities. Other useful phone numbers and addresses include the following:

Lifeline (☎ 13 11 14) Provides 24-hour phone counselling services, including suicide prevention.

National Roads & Motorists' Association (NRMA; 13 11 11; www.nrma.com.au) Roadside assistance.

Police Stations Bondi (Map pp94–5; ☎ 9365 9699; 77 Gould St); City Centre (Map pp62–3; ☎ 9265 6595; 570 George St); Kings Cross (Map p78; ☎ 8356 0099; Fitzroy Gardens); Surry Hills (Map pp90–1; ☎ 9265 4144; 151–241 Goulburn St)

Rape Crisis Centre (☎ 1800 424 017)

Wayside Chapel (Map p78; ☎ 9358 6577; 29 Hughes St, Kings Cross; ☎ 7am–10pm) Crisis centre.

HOLIDAYS

On public holidays, government departments, banks, offices, large stores and post offices are closed. On Good Friday and Christmas Day, there is limited newspaper circulation and about the only stores you'll find open are convenience stores. Public holidays include the following:

New Year's Day 1 January

Australia Day 26 January

Easter (Good Friday to Easter Monday) March/April

Anzac Day 25 April

Queen's Birthday 2nd Monday in June

Bank Holiday 1st Monday in August

Labour Day 1st Monday in October

Christmas Day 25 December

Boxing Day 26 December

Most public holidays become long weekends (three days), so if a holiday such as New Year's Day falls on a weekend, the following Monday is usually a holiday.

Something else to consider when planning a trip to Sydney is school holidays, when everything gets decidedly more crowded and accommodation rates soar. Sydney students have a long summer break that includes Christmas and most of January. Other school holidays fall around March to April (Easter), late June to mid-July, and late September to early October.

INTERNET ACCESS

Many hostels and midrange hotels have internet access for their guests, and practically all top-end hotels will have internet plugs in rooms. Some offer internet free but others charge a hefty fee (particularly in more expensive hotels). Download the details of your ISP's access numbers before you leave home. It's often cheaper to use an internet café.

Internet cafés have mushroomed all over Sydney, which, happily, means competitive prices for the traveller. Kings Cross has the highest concentration but Chinatown and Bondi are not far behind. As well as allowing you to access the web, many offer word-processing, fax, scanning and printing services too. You can expect to pay around \$3 per hour, although night rates are cheaper.

Global Gossip is a reliable local chain of internet cafés, with branches in [Kings Cross](#) (Map p78; ☎ 9326 9777; 61 Darlinghurst Rd), [Bondi Beach](#) (Map pp94–5; ☎ 9365 4811; 37 Hall St), [Haymarket](#) (Map p72; ☎ 9212 4444; 790 George St) and the [city](#) (Map p72; ☎ 9365 4811; 415 Pitt St).

Most libraries offer free internet access, but you need to book ahead at busy times. Try Customs House (p58).

Telstra Bigpond (☎ 137 663; www.bigpond.com) is a local provider; the access number is given here.

MAPS

Just about every brochure you pick up includes a map of the city centre, but Lonely Planet's *Sydney City Map* is an exceptional choice. Drivers should pick up Sydney and Blue Mountains street directories by UBD (\$42) or Gregory's (\$35).

For a great selection of travel maps (and Lonely Planet guidebooks) check out [Map World](#) (Map pp62–3; ☎ 9261 3601; www.mapworld.net.au; 280 Pitt St; ☎ 9am–5.30pm Mon–Wed & Fri, 9am–6.30pm Thu, 10am–3.45pm Sat). For touring maps, particularly of country areas, see the NRMA (p218).

MEDICAL SERVICES

Visitors from Finland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the UK have reciprocal health rights, entitling them to treatments that are 'medically necessary', including free treatment in public hospitals and subsidised medicine. In some cases you'll need to pay upfront and then be reimbursed once you've registered at any [Medicare](#) (☎ 13 20 11; www.medicare.gov.au) office. Travel insurance is advisable to cover other expenses (such as ambulance and repatriation).

Clinics

If you need to find a dentist in a hurry, call ☎ 9369 7050 (24 hours).

Kings Cross Travellers Clinic (Map p78; ☎ 9358 3066; www.travellersclinic.com.au; 13 Springfield Ave, Kings Cross; ☎ 9am–1pm & 2–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–noon Sat; ☎ Kings Cross) Bookings advised for dive medicals.

Travellers Medical & Vaccination Centre (Map pp62–3; ☎ 9221 7133; www.traveldocor.com.au; 7th fl, 428 George St, City; ☎ 9am–5.30pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 9am–8pm Tue & Thu, 9am–1pm Sat; ☎ Town Hall) This is the best place to get any travel-related shots and medical advice.

Emergency Rooms

Hospitals with 24-hour accident and emergency departments (sometimes known as

casualty wards or emergency rooms) include the following:

Royal North Shore Hospital (☎ 9926 7111; Pacific Hwy, St Leonards)

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (Map pp100–1; ☎ 9515 6111; Missenden Rd, Camperdown)

St Vincent's Public Hospital (Map p78; ☎ 8382 2520; Victoria St, Darlinghurst)

Sydney Children's Hospital (☎ 9382 1430; High St, Randwick)

Sydney Hospital & Sydney Eye Hospital (Map pp62–3; ☎ 9382 7009; 8 Macquarie St, City)

MONEY

The unit of currency is the Australian dollar, which is divided into 100 cents. There are \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10 and \$5 notes and \$2, \$1, 50c, 20c, 10c and 5c coins. The 2c and 1c coins have been taken out of circulation, so shops will round prices up (or down) to the nearest 5c on your total bill.

Notes are plastic (which means they don't disintegrate in the washing machine) and every denomination note is a different colour and size.

Travellers cheques have become something of a dinosaur these days, and they won't be accepted everywhere. It's easier not to bother with them.

ATMS

Central Sydney is chock-full of banks with 24-hour ATMs that will accept all debit and credit cards linked to international network systems, such as Cirrus, Maestro, Barclays Connect and Solo. Most banks place a \$1000 limit on the amount you can withdraw daily. You'll also find ATMs in pubs and clubs. Shops and retail outlets will have Eftpos facilities, which allow you to pay for purchases with your debit or credit card.

Changing Money

Both **American Express** (Map pp62–3; ☎ 1300 139 060; 105 Pitt St, City; ☎ 8.30am–5pm Mon–Fri; 📍 Wynyard) and **Travelex/Thomas Cook** (Map pp62–3; ☎ 9231 2523; 92 King St, City; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat; 📍 Martin Place) have branches throughout Sydney.

Exchange bureaus are common in the city centre, but shop around as rates can vary and most charge some sort of commission. Bureaus include the two at **Central Station** (☎ 8am–

5pm Mon–Fri, 9am–6pm Sat & Sun) and one opposite Wharf 6 at **Circular Quay** (☎ 8am–8.30pm). There are plenty in touristy spots like Kings Cross and Bondi, as well as the airport (where they're open until the last flight comes in; rates here aren't quite as good as in the city centre, however).

Credit Cards

Visa, MasterCard, Diners Club and American Express are widely accepted. For lost cards, contact the organisation:

American Express ☎ 1300 132 639

Diners Club ☎ 1300 360 060

MasterCard ☎ 1800 120 113

Visa ☎ 1800 450 346

NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

The *Sydney Morning Herald* is one of the best newspapers in Australia. It's a serious daily, but also captures some of Sydney's larrikinism. The other big Sydney paper is the Murdoch tabloid, the *Daily Telegraph*, which tends to concentrate on the lowest-common-denominator issues, such as kicking refugees when they're down, 'dole bludger' exposés and Nicole Kidman sightings (an obsession with all papers, actually).

Two national newspapers are available in Sydney: *The Australian*, a relatively conservative daily that has an interesting weekend edition; and the business-oriented *Australian Financial Review*. There are also a healthy number of weekly newspapers for Australia's ethnic communities, some published in English; these can be found in most newsagents.

Magazines worth looking out for include *Delicious*, an excellent Sydney-based foodies' mag with features, reviews and recipes. If it happens to be home-grown Australian political satire you're after, try the Sydney-based newspaper *The Chaser*. Caustically funny, it's probably going to get you up to speed on local politics faster than the broadsheets will. You can purchase a copy at most newsagents.

Sydney has a healthy free street press, available from boutiques, bars and cafés. It includes music publications (*3D World*, *Revolver*, *Drum Media*) and gay and lesbian newspapers (*Sydney Star Observer*, *Lesbians On The Loose*, *SX*).

ORGANISED TOURS

Harbour Cruises

There's a wide range of harbour cruises available, from paddle steamers to sailing yachts. If you're pinching pennies, take the \$12.80 return trip on the ferry to Manly and consider yourself very clever.

CAPTAIN COOK CRUISES

☎ 9206 1111; www.captaincook.com.au; Wharf 6, Circular Quay

As well as harbour highlights and ritzy dinner cruises, this crew offers the aquatic version of a hop-on/hop-off bus tour – with 11 daily departures stopping at Watsons Bay, Shark Island (selected cruises only), Taronga Zoo, Luna Park, Darling Harbour and Circular Quay (adult/child \$29/15).

MAGISTIC CRUISES

☎ 8296 7222; www.magisticcruises.com.au; King St, Wharf 5, Darling Harbour or Wharf 6, Circular Quay

The fancy boats of Magistic have a range of cruising options, ranging from CruiseSmart (one hour, adult/child/family \$33/18/80, four daily) offering all the harbour icons and a free beer, to a Dinner Cruise (two hours, adult/child \$89/49, daily) with a seafood buffet.

MATILDA CRUISES

☎ 9264 7377; www.matilda.com.au; Aquarium Wharf, Darling Harbour

Not waltzing but sailing, Matilda offers eight different cruise options on luxury catamarans, including daily whale-watching trips between June and July (adult/child \$75/59).

OZ JET BOATING

☎ 9808 3700; www.ozjetboating.com; East Circular Quay

See the harbour as it whizzes by in a 30-minute (adult/child \$55/40) or 45-minute (adult/child \$80/\$55) short, fast, adrenalin-pumping blur. Each trip includes a safety briefing so the actual cruising time is even shorter.

SYDNEY FERRIES HARBOURSIGHTS CRUISES

☎ 131 500; www.sydneyferries.info/attractions/harboursightscruises.php; Circular Quay

These excellent short cruises allow you to take in the sights, sounds and smells of the harbour at a reasonable price. Take your pick from the Morning Cruise (one hour, adult/child \$18/9, 10.30am), Afternoon Cruise (2½ hours, adult/child \$24/12, 1pm Monday to Friday, 12.30pm Saturday and Sunday) or Evening Harbour Lights Cruise (1½ hours, adult/child \$22/11, 8pm Monday to Saturday). You'll need to arrive early as tickets are allocated on a first-in, first-seated basis.

SYDNEY SHOWBOATS

☎ 8296 7200; www.sydneyshowboats.com.au;

King St, Wharf 5, Darling Harbour

Settle in for a three-hour, three-course dinner cruise (\$125) on these paddlewheelers and you'll get showgirls flashing their knickers Moulin Rouge-style, cabaret singers and a personal magician for your table. Very, very camp.

TRIBAL WARRIOR

☎ 96993491; www.tribalwarrior.org; Pontoon, East Circular Quay

Cruise, learn and experience Aboriginal culture and history on this two-hour boat trip (adult/child \$55/45), stopping at Clark Island for a traditional Koori welcome. You'll be contributing to a worthwhile community self-sufficiency project. Bookings essential.

City Bus Tours

BONDI EXPLORER

☎ 131 500; www.sydneypass.info; adult/child/family \$39/19/97; ☎ 8.45am–4.15pm

The Bondi Explorer runs along a large circuit from Circular Quay to Kings Cross, Double Bay, Rose Bay, Vaucluse, Watsons Bay, Bondi Beach, Coogee, returning to the city via Randwick and Moore Park. Just riding around the circuit takes two hours, so if you want to get off at many of the 19 places of interest along the way, start early. Blue buses depart every 30 minutes, and tickets can be purchased on board or at TransitShops (p218).

SYDNEY EXPLORER

☎ 131 500; www.sydneypass.info; adult/child/family \$39/19/97; ☎ 8.40am–5.20pm

Red buses navigate the inner city on a route designed to pass most central attractions. A bus departs from Circular Quay every 20

minutes, but you can board at any of the 27 clearly marked red bus stops on the route. Tickets are sold on board and at Transit-Shops (p218) and entitle you to get on and off the bus as often as you like. Commentary is provided, and sights include the Opera House, the Art Gallery of NSW, Kings Cross and the Powerhouse Museum.

Tours on Foot

There are plenty of guided tours for those who prefer to pound the pavement while sightseeing. If you'd prefer to go it alone, we've put together a walking tour for each neighbourhood covered by this book. The [City of Sydney](#) ([www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](#)) publish a series of walking tour pamphlets, available from information kiosks and downloadable from their website. See also Sydney Architecture Walks (p35).

BRIDGECLIMB Map p54

☎ 8274 7777; [www.bridgeclimb.com](#); 5 Cumberland St, The Rocks; adult \$179-295, child \$109-195
A once-in-a-lifetime experience and worth the bucks for the unforgettable views and the enthusiastic guides. Even if you're afraid of heights, the scariest part is crossing over the grates while *under* the bridge; on the curved span itself the track is wide enough that you never look straight down. Plus, you're securely attached to a safety cable at all times. Hell, if everyone from Bruce Springsteen to Bette Midler has done it, how bad can it be?

The 3½-hour tour includes safety checks and donning the climbing suit. The Discovery Climb is a new variation, taking you via steep ramps and ladders into the internal workings of the bridge before following the arch to the top.

You'll get a complimentary group photo, but cameras are banned so any other photos must be purchased (at premium prices). The priciest climbs are at dawn and twilight.

SYDNEY ABORIGINAL DISCOVERIES

☎ 9680 3098; [www.sydneyaustour.com.au/Abordiscover.html](#); adult \$66-180
This outfit offers a variety of interesting tours focused on indigenous culture and history. Options include a harbour cruise, an enjoyable walkabout tour, a feast of native Australian foods and a Dreamtime cruise.

SYDNEY GUIDED TOURS

☎ 9660 7157; [www.ozemail.com.au/~mpfry](#); 2hr guided walk per person \$18, minimum 10 people, or \$180 per tour

A one-woman operation, Maureen Fry caters mainly for groups but she can take individuals or perhaps fit you in with another crowd.

THE ROCKS GHOST TOURS

☎ 1300 731 971; [www.ghosttours.com.au](#); tour \$34
If you like a good creepy yarn, these two-hour tours depart from [Cadman's Cottage](#) (p56) nightly (6.45pm April to October, 7.45pm November to March).

THE ROCKS WALKING TOURS

Map p54

☎ 9247 6678; 23 Playfair St, The Rocks; adult/child \$22/11

With regular 90-minute tours, this outfit will lead you through the historical Rocks area, point out details you'd never see on your own and tell you tales of the colourful characters that once lived here. Tours run weekdays at 10.30am, 12.30pm and 2.30pm (January just 10.30am and 2.30pm) and weekends at 11.30am and 2pm.

Other Tours

BIKESCAPE

☎ 9569 4111; [www.bikescape.com.au](#); 183 Parramatta Rd, Annandale; tours from \$110

Bikescape offers Harley Davidson tours around town or lengthy road trips. It's also a trustworthy source of motorbikes for hire – from \$82 per day for a 125cc Vespa, to \$305 for a 1450cc Harley Davidson Road King.

DESTINY TOURS

☎ 9943 0167; [www.destinytours.com.au](#); adult \$36-77, child \$18-39

Quirky as all hell, this company offers nighttime ghost and history tours in a black Cadillac hearse named Elvira. Discover the unwritten side of Sydney while rattling some skeletons in the city's murky closets.

OZ TRAILS

☎ 1300 853 842; [www.oztrails.com.au](#)

This reader-recommended tour operator specialises in small-group day tours to the Blue Mountains (adult/child \$68/60, departs 8am, returns 6pm), Hunter Valley (boutique wine tour \$88) and other choice spots.

You can arrange a charter or join in with another troupe.

SYDNEY BY SEAPLANE

☎ 9974 1455; [www.sydneybyseaplane.com](#); Rose Bay Seaplane Base, Lyne Park, Rose Bay; adult \$145-475, child \$101-330; 🚢 Rose Bay

If you think Sydney looks beautiful from the ground, a scenic flight will knock your socks off. This organisation has a variety of scenic flights (from 15 to 60 minutes) which offer views of Sydney Harbour, the northern beaches and coastline, plus areas further afield such as the Hawkesbury River and Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. Fly and dine packages are also available, from picnics in obscure places to hard-to-reach posh restaurants.

SYDNEY NIGHT CAT TOURS

☎ 1300 551 608; [www.nightcattours.com](#); adult/child \$69/55

Check out some of Sydney's famous quirky nightspots on this night-time bus tour. It offers plenty of opportunities to stop for snacks and drinks, including a complimentary feed. Chartered day trips to the Blue Mountains and Hunter Valley are also available.

PHARMACIES

Every shopping strip and mall has a pharmacy. The following have conveniently long hours:

Blakes Pharmacy (Map p78; ☎ 9358 6712; 20 Darlinghurst Rd, Kings Cross; 🕒 8am-11pm Mon-Fri, 9am-11pm Sat & Sun)

Park Pharmacy (Map pp100-1; ☎ 9552 3372; 321 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun)

Wu's Pharmacy (Map p72; ☎ 9211 1805; 629 George St, City; 🕒 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-7pm Sun)

POST

There are post office branches everywhere throughout the city centre.

Australia Post ([www.auspost.com.au](#))

General post office (GPO; Map pp62-3; 1 Martin Pl, City; 🕒 8.15am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) Original central post office.

Poste restante service (Map pp62-3; ☎ 9244 3732; level 2A, Hunter Connection building, 310 George St, City; 🕒 8.15am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) You'll need identification.

It costs 50c to send a postcard or standard letter within Australia. Airmail letters (weighing

up to 50g) cost \$1.30 to the Asia/Pacific region and \$1.95 to the rest of the world. Mailing postcards anywhere outside Australia costs a flat \$1.25.

RADIO

Sydney is not short of radio stations. The Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) has the intelligent talk stations Radio National (576AM) and 702 ABC Sydney (702AM), along with the wonderful ABC Classic FM (92.9FM). Triple J (105.7FM) is the ABC's popular alternative rock station. There are also the SBS multilingual stations (1107AM and 97.7FM), the multicultural 2000 FM (98.5FM) and the fabulous subscriber-based 2MBS (102.5FM). The unique Koori Radio broadcasts on 88.9FM.

TAX & REFUNDS

There is a 10% goods and services tax (GST) automatically added to almost anything you buy. If you purchase goods with a total minimum value of \$300 from any one store within 30 days of departure from Australia, you are entitled to a refund of any GST paid. Keep your receipts and carry the items on board your flight; you can get a cheque refund at the designated booth located past customs at Sydney airport (see [www.cus.toms.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=4646](#) for more information).

TELEPHONE

Public telephones, which can be found all over the city, take phonecards, credit cards and occasionally coins. Local calls cost 50c.

Australia's country code is ☎ 61 and Sydney's area code is ☎ 02. Toll-free numbers start with the prefix ☎ 1800, while numbers that start with ☎ 1300 charge only the cost of a local call. Australia's international access code is ☎ 0011 (used when dialling other countries from Australia). Drop the zero from the area code when dialling into Australia.

Most hotels will have services that allow you to send or receive faxes. Global Gossip (see p223) has fax machines as well.

Mobile Phones

Phone numbers with four-digit prefixes beginning with 04 are for mobiles. Australia's

digital network is compatible with GSM 900 and 1800 handsets (used in Europe). Quad-band US phones will work, but to avoid global-roaming charges, you need an unlocked handset that takes prepaid SIM cards from Australian providers such as Telstra, Optus, Virgin or Vodafone.

Mobiles brought from other states of Australia can be used in the Sydney area, but check roaming charges with your carrier. Sydneysiders will seem glued to their mobiles at all times of the day and night. Despite a reasonable grasp of phone etiquette – not in cinemas, not at the opera, not at funerals – many Sydneysiders will still answer handheld mobiles while driving, despite it being illegal. If some idiot nearly runs you down at a pedestrian crossing, chances are they'll be on their mobile.

Phonecards

Local and international phonecards range in value from \$5 to \$50 – look for the phonecard logo at retail outlets, such as newsagents. There is a bewildering variety of cards available, with all sorts of deals aimed at visitors wanting to get in touch with loved ones in the Europe, Asia and the Americas. Shop around.

TV

Sydney has five free-to-air TV channels. ABC (channel two) is government-funded and relies heavily on BBC material, and also offers good local news and current affairs programs, with the occasional documentary, drama or comedy thrown in. Seven and Nine get the biggest ratings, showing a steady run of popular American shows, shock-and-horror news and endless sports such as cricket and footy. Ten is similar but targeted at the youth market with profitable reality shows, wacky sitcoms and American reruns. SBS invariably has the most intelligent programming, screening plenty of foreign films, multicultural programs, artistic documentaries, occasional soccer finals and the best news around.

TIME

Sydney is on Eastern Standard Time (EST), which is 10 hours ahead of GMT/UTC. That means when it's noon in Sydney it's 9pm the day before in New York, 6pm the day before in Los Angeles, 2am in London, 4am in

Johannesburg, 11am in Tokyo and 2pm in Auckland. Daylight savings time is one hour ahead of standard time from late October to March.

TIPPING

Most services don't expect a tip and you shouldn't feel pressured into giving one, even at fancy restaurants. If the service is good, however, it is customary to tip porters (gold coin), waiters and waitresses (10%) and taxi drivers (round up to the nearest dollar).

TOURIST INFORMATION

All hours following vary with the seasons; summer hours tend to be longer.

City Host Information Kiosk Circular Quay (Map p54; ☎ 9am–4.45pm); Martin Place (Map pp62–3); Town Hall (Map pp62–3) The Martin Place and Town Hall outlets have sporadic opening hours/days.

Darling Harbour Visitors Centre (Map p72; ☎ 9240 8797; Darling Harbour; ☎ 9.30am–5.30pm) Behind the IMAX Theatre; specialising in info about NSW, with lots of pamphlets on tours, hotels and entertainment options.

Manly Visitor Information Centre (Map p110; ☎ 9977 1088; Manly Wharf; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat & Sun) This helpful visitors centre, just outside the ferry wharf and alongside the bus interchange, has free pamphlets on the 10km **Manly Scenic Walkway** (p110) and other Manly attractions, plus loads of local bus information.

Parramatta Heritage & Visitors Centre (☎ 8839 3311; 346A Church St; ☎ 9am–5pm) Staff are incredibly knowledgeable with loads of brochures and leaflets on hand, and plenty of info on access for visitors with impaired mobility and for those with an interest in Aboriginal sites.

Sydney Coach Terminal (Map p72; ☎ 9281 9366; Eddy Ave, Central Station; ☎ 6am–10pm) Bus and hotel bookings, plus luggage storage. Not radically helpful, but then again, it could just be the location, which has extremely bad feng shui.

Sydney Harbour National Parks Information Centre (Map p54; ☎ 9247 5033; Cadman's Cottage, 110 George St, The Rocks; ☎ 9.30am–4.30pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4.30pm Sat & Sun) Has maps of walks in different parts of the park and organises tours of the harbour islands.

Sydney Visitor Centre (☎ 9667 6058; Sydney airport; ☎ 6am–10.30pm) A good first port of call for travellers flying into Sydney. Book discounted hotel rooms, tours, entertainment tickets and even onward travel.

The Rocks Sydney Visitor Centre (Map p54; ☎ 9240 8788; www.sydneyvisitorcentre.com; cnr Argyle & Playfair Sts, The Rocks; ☎ 9.30am–5.30pm) Helpful and knowledgeable staff, with tons of brochures and information on aspects of Sydney and NSW. Find a hotel, get the lowdown on restaurants with harbour views, book a tour and arrange transport for day trips out of town. Ask about walking around the neighbourhood.

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Compared with many other major cities, Sydney has great disabled access for its citizens and visitors. Most of Sydney's main attractions are accessible by wheelchair, and all new or renovated buildings must, by law, include wheelchair access. Older buildings can pose some problems, however, and some restaurants and entertainment venues aren't quite up to scratch. A number of taxis accommodate wheelchairs – advise the operator when making a telephone booking.

Most of Sydney's major attractions offer hearing loops and sign-language interpreters for hearing-impaired travellers. It's best to make contact with venue staff in advance.

Many new buildings incorporate architectural features that are helpful to the vision impaired, such as textured floor details at the top and bottom of stairs. Sydney's pedestrian crossings feature sound cues.

Sydney also has lots of parking spaces reserved for disabled drivers. The **City of Sydney** (www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au) has information about accessibility on their website.

Organisations

Access Foundation (☎ 9692 9322; www.accessibility.com.au; 56 Bowman St, Pyrmont)

City of Sydney (www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/AboutSydney/CBDDisabledAccess/Default.asp) Website lists parking spaces, transport information, CBD access maps and other information.

Deaf Society of NSW (☎ 9893 8555; www.deaf.societynsw.org.au; 4th fl, 169 Macquarie St, Parramatta)

Roads and Transport Authority (☎ 13 22 13; www.rta.nsw.gov.au) Supplies temporary parking permits for disabled international drivers.

Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (www.scia.org.au) Publishes the handy *Access Sydney* (\$15.95).

Vision Australia (☎ 1300 84 74 66; www.rbs.org.au; 4 Mitchell St, Enfield)

VISAS

Unless you're a New Zealand citizen you'll require a visa for visiting Australia. Citizens of Canada, the US, Japan, Hong Kong, many European countries and a few others can easily get an **Electronic Travel Authority** (ETA; www.eta.immi.gov.au) online. It's quick, costs only \$20 and is valid for up to three months (and good for one year). You must apply for it from outside Australia. Check the website to see if you are eligible.

If you're not from an eligible country, you'll need to apply for a three- or six-month tourist visa (\$70 outside Australia, \$204 within the country).

Regular visa application forms are available from either Australian diplomatic missions overseas or travel agents; you can apply by mail or in person. For further details, call the **Department of Immigration and Citizenship** (DIAC; ☎ 131 881; www.immi.gov.au). For the nearest consulate in your country check www.immi.gov.au/contacts/overseas/index.htm.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Sydney is generally safe for women travellers, although you should avoid walking alone late at night. Sexual harassment and discrimination, while uncommon, can occur and shouldn't be tolerated. If you do encounter infantile sexism from drunken louts, the best option is to leave without making any comments. In bars, use good sense and don't accept drinks from people you don't know or leave your drink unattended. Spiking drinks isn't a common practice, but it has occurred in the past.

WORK

Single visitors aged between 18 and 30 from Canada, the UK, the Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Germany, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan and most Scandinavian countries may be eligible for a working holiday visa. A few other nationalities are also eligible; see www.immi.gov.au for more information.

A working holiday visa allows for a stay of up to 12 months, but the emphasis is on casual, or incidental, employment rather than a full-time job, so working full-time for longer

than three months with any one employer is not allowed.

There are strict regulations governing overseas visitors working in Australia; see the website listed earlier for details. The best place

to seek work is in the Saturday employment section of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, but many hostels will help find you work (though it won't be highly paid). Jobs are also available on www.seek.com.au.

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