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**AUSSIE EXPATS AMONG THE WORLD'S WEALTHIEST
BUT AUSTRALIA CAN BE ISOLATING
SAYS HSBC GLOBAL EXPATRIATE SURVEY**

Australian expatriates living overseas are the third wealthiest in the world, with almost 40 per cent earning more than GBP100,000 (approx A\$208,000¹) a year, according to the biggest international survey on expatriate living ever released.

In terms of longevity however, Australia scored poorly, with foreign expatriates only living here for short periods of time (ranking second last out of 15 countries).

In contrast, those who do stay are deeply committed, with 22 per cent of Australian-based expatriates changing their citizenship, rocketing Australia to the leading position in this part of the expat experience.

Australia is also ranked the top destination for expatriates looking to increase their outdoor lifestyle. Eight out of ten indicated they spent more time outdoors than in their home country, reaffirming Australia's reputation as a place to enjoy the great outdoors. Australia was deemed the fifth best destination for accommodation standards.

Australian-based expats are younger than average, with more than half of them under the age of 34 years and 44 per cent aged 35-54. They work predominantly in finance (45 per cent work in finance, compared to an expat average of less than 40 per cent), followed by 24 per cent in professional services.

The *Expat Explorer Survey* by HSBC Bank International questioned expatriates across four continents about opportunities, challenges and difficulties that come with a life away from home. This included how they viewed the changes in their lifestyle, their children's experiences abroad and how easy expats found it to integrate in their new locations.

Expat Existence – the first report from the survey, focuses on expatriate lifestyle, ranked the top rated places to live based on expats' living standards, their ability to earn and save, a country or territory's popularity (longevity), and the level of luxury experienced.

Paul Say, head of Marketing and Communications at HSBC Bank International, said:

News Release

Aussie expats among the world's wealthiest says HSBC global expatriate research/2

“The global expat community is huge and living in foreign countries and territories means that expats don't often have the normal outlets to express their viewpoints. This survey has allowed us to delve into the lives of expats on an unprecedented scale and reveal some fascinating trends regarding how life differs from location to location.”

The research revealed Singapore as best place to live in the world, earning the overall top spot in this survey among 2,155 expatriates in 15 countries and territories. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the United States (US) tied for second overall best locations.

The research revealed that, as well as being top overall, Singapore was also rated best for quality of accommodation and second in terms of luxury living. The UK and France were some of the lowest rated expat destinations in the survey, scoring low on the areas of luxury and accommodation. Spain and China also rated poorly, ranking 12th and 11th respectively. Australia featured 10th in the survey, scoring highly on levels of luxury, ability to earn and save and accommodation, but scoring lower for longevity.

Earn and Save

Despite the current economic climate, expats spend more whilst still being able to save. Over half (52 per cent) of expats spend more on food in their new country of residence and 58 per cent also invest and save more in their resident country. Top countries for saving included India, the UAE, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Accommodation

Almost three quarters of expats living in Singapore said that the quality of their accommodation had improved since moving away from home, the highest score recorded in the study. This was followed by expats living in the United States (61 per cent) and Belgium (59 per cent). The UK was identified as the most expensive expat location for accommodation, with 85 per cent revealing that their living costs had increased. Only one-fifth (19 per cent) of respondents living in the UK said that the quality of their accommodation had improved. India was the cheapest country, with only 21 per cent claiming that their costs of accommodation had increased.

Longevity

While the Middle East and Asia were rated highest for standards of living and earnings, it is in Europe and the US where expats are likely to remain longest. The Netherlands was ranked first for longevity, with 82 per cent remaining there for more than three years, followed by Germany, the US and Belgium. Hong Kong and Singapore were

Aussie expats among the world's wealthiest says HSBC global expatriate research/3

ranked fifth and sixth respectively in terms of how long expats stayed, while India, Australia and mainland China were in the bottom three.

Luxury living

The report also investigates whether expats' lifestyles are more luxurious than the lives they left behind. Countries were rated on a number of categories including access to private healthcare, access to more than one property, gym membership, ownership of more than one car, private education for their children, ability to own a pool and to employ staff (such as cleaners).

Across the 11 categories of perceived luxuries, on average, expats reported an increase in eight of these factors, with the ability to employ household staff scoring the highest increase. The UAE was the most luxurious destination, with expats enjoying increases in 10 of the 11 categories, followed by Singapore, India and Hong Kong. The UK was ranked the least luxurious with decreases recorded in nine of the 11 luxuries.

“The expat community is highly important to a number of different economies throughout the world and getting this kind of insight into their everyday lives is helping to shed more light on a highly diverse and far reaching range of individuals,” said Mr Say.

“Overall, the Expat Explorer survey will deliver some unique insights into a range of facets of expat life, with our next report looking at the subject of offspring and some of the issues faced by expat parents. Our third planned report, on integration, will focus on some of the challenges faced by expats as they move from place to place.”

To see more of the findings and the full league table of the first report in the Expat Explorer Series, please visit www.offshore.hsbc.com/expatsurvey

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Notes to editors:

Footnotes

¹ £100,000 at exchange rate of 1 AUD = 0.482860 GBP

About the survey

The Expat Explorer survey was conducted by independent research companies – data capturing was undertaken by Virtual Surveys between the months of February – April 2008, with data analysis conducted by Freshminds. The

Aussie expats among the world's wealthiest says HSBC global expatriate research/4

survey looked at a range of topics relevant to expats' lives including living standards, an expat's ability to earn and save, a country's popularity and the level of luxury experienced.

The survey questioned 2,155 expatriates living in over 49 countries, however, only countries with at least 30 respondents were analysed in the league tables. Due to this small sample number, it was decided that countries with less than 30 responses was not statistically sufficient for detailed analysis in the league tables.

The league table consists of 15 countries and was formed based on the level of percentage changes across the different judging criteria and this was then scored accordingly. For example, Spain noted increases in 9 out of the 11 different luxuries, however when actual individual percentage changes were taken into account in each factor, Spain ranked 8th due to smaller percentage changes. The overall score for each country was based on taking the average of scores across the four categories (accommodation, earn and save, longevity and luxury).

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