

10 October, 2008

AUSTRALIA THE SECOND HEALTHIEST DESTINATION FOR RAISING KIDS, SAYS HSBC GLOBAL EXPATRIATE SURVEY

- *Expat kids in Australia spend more time outdoors than any other country, while watching less television and playing more sport*
- *Australian expat kids more likely to return home after living overseas*
- *Expats say raising children in Australia is more expensive than at home*
- *Expat children in Australia rank second last in number of languages spoken*

Expatriates have ranked Australia the sixth best country out of 14 in which to raise children, according to the *Offshore Offspring Report*, the second of three reports from the *Expat Explorer Survey* from HSBC Bank. Top ranking were Spain, France, Germany, Canada and Singapore, while the UK and UAE were the lowest rated destinations amongst the expats polled.

In a separate section of the report on children's health*, expats judged Australia the second healthiest country in which to raise children (following India). They see Australia as an attractive place for kids to lead a healthy and active lifestyle, with almost two-thirds (64%) of expat parents saying their children played more sports here and four out of ten saying they spend less time watching television here. Hong Kong, the UK and the US were seen as the least attractive locations health-wise to raise children

The HSBC Bank International *Expat Explorer Survey* is the largest-ever independent survey of expats, questioning 2,155 expatriates across four continents. The *Offshore Offspring Report* focuses on the challenges experienced by families raising children while living and working abroad. Expat parents were asked to rate their host country in five areas:

- Time their children spent outdoors
- Time their children spent studying
- Cost of raising children
- Number of languages spoken by their children
- Whether their children would remain in the country when older

Aaron le Cornu, Deputy Chief Executive Officer for HSBC Bank International, said: "We commissioned this independent survey to give us greater insight into the experiences of our customers who live and work all over the world, and raising a family is an important consideration when moving abroad.

Australia top destination for healthy, outdoor expat kids/2

“As a father of two, I know how daunting it can be to relocate your family to a foreign country, especially with young children, but there are enormous benefits from living an international life. Expat families have to overcome many different challenges, such as staying in touch with relatives and keeping family life as ‘normal’ as possible but I think the advantages that come from experiencing diverse cultures first hand are invaluable.

“I’m really interested to see the results from the Offshore Offspring report and see how HSBC, as a bank that specialises in financial solutions for expats, can learn from the findings and better meet the needs of those living and working abroad.”

Cost of raising children

According to the survey, finance centres are the most expensive countries in which to raise children. In Australia, nearly half (48%) of expats surveyed said it was more expensive to raise children in Australia than in their country of origin. Over four-fifths (85%) of expats living in the UK said they find it more expensive, while more than three quarters (79%) of parents in the UAE, and two-thirds (64%) of parents in Hong Kong also find their host countries more expensive. Spain, India and China are the cheapest countries in which to raise children, with half (55%, 50% and 50% respectively) of expats living in these countries reporting they have reduced costs for their children compared to their countries of origin.

Outdoor lifestyle

Generally, expats experience a more active lifestyle away from home and this is reflected in the experiences of their children, with almost half (44%) of expats reporting that their children spent more time outdoors in their adopted countries. The Mediterranean and countries with wide open spaces scored highly in this category: Australia came top of the table, where more than three-quarters (80%) of parents reported their children spend more time outdoors, followed by Spain (59%) and France (57%). In Hong Kong, only a third of expats said that their children spend more time outdoors while 41 per cent said their children spend less time outdoors.

Academic improvement

A third of parents said their children study more since moving overseas, with more than half (56%) reporting it remained about the same. Expatriate children in India topped the table, with two-thirds (67%) studying more so now than before, followed by children in France (57%) and Singapore (42%). Only 10% of expats reported a fall in study time.

Australia top destination for healthy, outdoor expat kids/3

Languages

Overall, almost two-thirds (63%) of expat children speak two or more languages but the trend does not extend to Australia. With only one-third (35%) of expat kids in Australia speaking two or more languages, Australia was ranked second lowest, with Canada lowest. Children living in Europe learn the greatest number of languages. Spain had the highest percentages of expat children speaking languages, with almost all (94%) speaking two or more languages. Germany and France also ranked highly, with 87% of expat children speaking two or more languages.

Length of children's stay

Australian expats overseas are among the fondest of their homeland, with 42% believing their children are likely to return home. Only three per cent of expats living in Hong Kong believe their children will stay in the territory while one-quarter (25%) of Hong Kong expats living overseas expect their children to return to Hong Kong. Canada also scored highly with one-third of expats living in Canada reporting they expect their children to remain there.

“The expat community is so diverse and there are many factors that come into play when deciding to relocate to another country,” said Mr Le Cornu.

“We have seen through this report that there are very different reasons behind a single expat's choice to move when compared to those who have families to think about. Our third and final report still to come, *Expat Experience*, will examine another aspect to expat life and what many consider to be a pivotal factor – how easy it is to integrate in their new country.”

Top ranked countries					
Rank	Cost	Languages	Outdoor	Study	Longevity
1	Spain	Spain	Australia	India	Canada
2	India	Belgium	Spain	France	US
3	China	France/Germ any	France	Singapore	Germany

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

ends/more

Australia top destination for healthy, outdoor expat kids/4

Media enquiries to:

Kate Epworth on +61 2 9006 5682 /

+61 418 700 172 /

kateepworth@hsbc.com.au

Daniel Pigott on +61 2 9006 5396 /

+61 422 908 994 /

danielpigott@hsbc.com.au

Notes to editors

*Analysis of the healthiest countries for expats was not included in the league table.

About the survey

The Expat Explorer Survey examined the 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 in a new country, and how easy expats found it to integrate.

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

The survey questioned 2,155 expatriates living in over 48 countries and territories, however only countries/territories with at least 30 respondents were analysed in the league tables. Due to this small sample number, it was decided that countries/territories with less than 30 responses were not statistically sufficient for detailed analysis in the league tables. The league table consists of 14 countries/territories and was formed based on the level of percentage changes across the different judging criteria and this was then scored accordingly. The overall score for each country/territory was based on the average of scores across all categories (outdoor time, study time, cost, languages and longevity). Individual country/territory data has also been used to indicate interesting trends. The data on healthy countries/territories was not included in the analysis of the overall league table.

HSBC Bank Australia

In Australia, the HSBC Group offers an extensive range of financial services through a network of 35 branches and offices. These services include personal and commercial financial services, financial planning, trade finance, treasury and financial markets, payments and cash management and securities custody.

Principal HSBC Group members operating in Australia include HSBC Bank Australia Limited (ABN 48 006 434 162) and The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (ABN 65 117 925 970). HSBC is marketed worldwide as 'the world's local bank'.

ends