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LARGEST GLOBAL STUDY OF EXPATS REVEALS AUSTRALIA'S TRUE COLOURS

- *Australia number one for expatriates adopting citizenship*
 - *Australians the third most friendly destination*
- *Australian expats overseas most likely to join community groups*

Research from HSBC Bank has revealed Australia is the third most friendly country for expatriates, with 91 percent of expats in Australia saying they have easily made friends with locals.

According to the findings of the third and final report in the HSBC Expat Explorer survey, *Expat Experience*, Australia scored highly in categories such as making friends with locals and adopting citizenship, but overall was ranked 11th of 14 countries surveyed as standard indicators of integration like learning the language and community group involvement didn't stand up down under.

The HSBC Expat Explorer survey is the largest ever independent survey of expatriates, questioning 2,155 expats across four continents. The *Expat Experience* report examines the integration challenges faced by expats relocating to a new country by looking at the cultural and social differences experienced.

Graham Heunis, Head of Personal Financial Services at HSBC Bank Australia, said: "HSBC commissioned this independent survey to take a look into the lives and experiences of our customers who live across the globe and the transitional challenges they encounter from country to country.

"This final report in our Expat Explorer series focuses on something that is incredibly important to all expats – their ability to fit in to their new environment. Through this research we have been provided with a fascinating insight into our customers' lives which will help us also to best adapt to their offshore finance needs."

Making friends with the local population

Australia scored highly for forming friendships, with 91 per cent of expats living in Australia claiming that they made friends with locals, the third highest behind Canada (95 per cent) and Germany (92 per cent). Seventy-nine per cent of Australian expats overseas found it easy to make friends in their offshore home.

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News Release

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The United Arab Emirates was revealed as the hardest country for making friends with locals, with only half of expats there (54 per cent) finding it easy to make local friends.

Joining local community groupsⁱ

Despite scoring highly for making friends with the locals, Australia was ranked last in the 'joining a community group' category. Just 38 per cent of expats living in Australia said that they had joined a community group – possibly because expats surveyed living in Australia tended to be younger than in other countries (over half are 18-34 years old) and may have found it easier to meet people outside of organised social groups.

In contrast, Australians living as expats in other countries came top of the table for joining a local community group, with 57 per cent keen to make friends in this way, just behind the US (54 per cent) and Brazil (53 per cent).

Learning the local language

According to the research, expatriates originating from the Americas were most likely to learn a new language – over half (51 per cent) of expats from the US and half (50 per cent) of Brazilians made an effort to learn the local language. A significant proportion of Irish expats (41 per cent) and Australian expats (32 per cent) overseas also learned the language when they moved to a new country.

Conversely, fewer than one in ten expats living in Australia, 15 per cent of expats in the US and 18 per cent of those in the United Kingdom learned the local language – in each case English. Expats living in Europe were most likely to learn the local language. Germany came top in this category with three quarters of expats learning German, followed by 70 per cent of expats in Spain and Belgium who were also likely to adopt the language of their country of residence.

Buying property and setting up businesses

Expatriates living in Australia were more likely to purchase property (35 per cent) than Australian expats overseas (21 per cent) but were less likely to set up business here (9 per cent) than Australians offshore (12 per cent).

Over half of expats who move to France (64 per cent), Canada (55 per cent) or Spain (52 per cent) decided to purchase property there while Singapore ranked as the most popular country for setting up a business, with 26 per cent of expats saying they had done so, followed by 25 per cent in Spain.

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Expats in Asia were the least likely to buy a home – India (6 per cent), China (12 per cent) and Singapore (26 per cent) came last in the survey for purchasing a property. Expats from the UK are the most likely to buy property abroad, almost half claimed to have done so, followed by 40 per cent of South Africans and 37 per cent of Indians. Unsurprisingly, the majority of people who bought property were in the £200,000 + salary bracket.

Having children and marrying into the local population

Germany and the Netherlands are the best locations to find love, with a quarter of expats in Germany (24 per cent) and the Netherlands (23 per cent) having married a person from the local community.

Australian expats overseas were relatively amorous, with 12 per cent of them marrying a local and 18 per cent having children while there.

More than a third of expats in Belgium had children since moving there, followed by 32 per cent of those living in Germany. Interestingly, a third of Indian expats had children since moving away from India, in contrast with just 4 per cent of people from Hong Kong.

Expats living in China are the least likely to add to their families – just 8 per cent reported taking this step – followed by expats living in India (9 per cent) and, despite scoring highly for buying property and setting up a business, France (10 per cent).

Changing citizenship

The survey also revealed that Australian expats living overseas were among the least likely to become citizens in their new country of residence, with only 4 per cent opting to change citizenship, behind Brazil and Germany on 3 per cent each.

Conversely, expats who moved to Australia were more likely than in any other country to become citizens, with 22 per cent deciding to adopt Australian citizenship, followed by Canada (20 per cent) and the US (14 per cent).

This contrasts sharply with the overall trend on citizenship; just six per cent of those surveyed overall permanently changing their citizenship.

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Notes to editors

ⁱ For the purposes of the questionnaire, community group was explained as a religious group/sports club/shared-interest group.

HSBC Bank Australia

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