Study Newcastle

CREATIVE AND VIBRANT

ONE OF LONELY PLANET’S TOP 10 CITIES IN BEST IN TRAVEL 2011!
This Is Newcastle
Facts about Newcastle
07 Top Highlights
Newcastle Calendar
Live Newcastle
Multicultural Newcastle: Home Away from Home
Student Life in Newcastle
Further Reading & Websites

HANI AKBAR
» Age 22 from Saudi Arabia
» From Saudi Arabia
» Studying an International Foundation program

What do you think of Newcastle?
It’s so beautiful, not big not small, nice. It’s a good place for students who are studying, with a lot of nice people. You can make a lot of friends. There are beautiful beaches, and it’s more natural than Sydney, with the views and the trees.

What do you do when you’re not studying?
I go to the CBD or beach to catch up with friends.

What have you learnt since moving to Newcastle?
I play beach volleyball with my friends every weekend in summer and sometimes in winter. I’ve had a couple of goes at kite surfing.

Have you been able to see much of Australia?
Yes. I went on a road trip with some friends from Newcastle to Cairns.

Are you happy you chose Newcastle to study at?
Yes, happy. Newcastle is like home for me now. When I travel around Australia I’m like, ok, I want to go to home to Newcastle now!

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Beautiful, natural, safe, clean, peaceful, innovative, multicultural, comfortable, cool...these are just some of the words students at the University of Newcastle use to describe the city. Lonely Planet named it one of the world’s top cities in 2011, and it doesn’t take long to work out why.

Australia’s second-oldest city has all of the advantages of its famous southern neighbour Sydney – a great climate, spectacular surf beaches, interesting art galleries, hip cafes and restaurants, lively pubs, bars and clubs, and diverse shops and markets – but none of the disadvantages of big-city living. With a population of around half a million in the greater Newcastle area (compared with Sydney’s 4.4 million), it’s easy to get around by car, bike, bus and train. The CBD itself has parks, gardens and plenty of open space at the beach and harbour. Smiling locals are always ready for a chat, making this one of Australia’s friendliest cities. Newcastle’s warm, genuine sense of community means it’s an easy and enjoyable place to visit, live, work and study. Those seeking bright-city lights can reach Sydney in a two-hour hop by car or train, a short plane ride or a scenic trip by seaplane.

Newcastle has a diverse range of street landscapes: international restaurants and cosmopolitan cafes line Beaumont Street in Hamilton; museums, galleries and gracious historic buildings fill the Civic cultural precinct; and cool cafes and clothing shops make it easy to while away a day on Darby Street in Cooks Hill. Newcastle East boasts the beach, parks, sea-breeze-swept cafes and striking glass-and-steel buildings that house apartments and luxury hotels. Lambton relishes its village atmosphere and live-music venues, while sparkling new and ready to impress is the Honeysuckle precinct – with waterside bars, trendy restaurants and an easy-to-explore history.

It’s only a short trip to a wide variety of attractions in the surrounding area. Visit Australia’s oldest vineyards and taste the world-renowned wines of the Hunter Valley; go sandboarding in Stockton or whale watching around pretty Port Stephens; see kangaroos and koalas at Blackbutt Reserve and walk the trails around tranquil Lake Macquarie.

Set over its own swath of bushland within the city, the University of Newcastle is one of Australia’s leading academic institutions and an integral part of the community.

Perhaps the word that best sums up Newcastle is ‘surprising’. Check it out for yourself.
Facts about Newcastle

Newcastle has more artists per capita than anywhere else in Australia. Not coincidentally, the city also has the most art galleries per capita, too. What’s more, Newcastle’s artists are leading the inner-city regeneration scheme, Renew Newcastle (p20). Painter and sculptor William Dobell (1899–1970) was born in Cooks Hill, and the band Silverchair claims Newcastle as its own, as do many other artists.

Technology in Newcastle is at the cutting edge. Newcastle may have a relaxed feel, but it’s no technological backwater, as evidenced everywhere from the readily available wireless internet (including free public hot spots) to the university’s state-of-the-art systems. Progressive architectural design codes ensure that the city’s new structures are not only efficiently and safely built, but are also aesthetically advanced too.

Newcastle is an award-winning, environmentally friendly city. Once known as Steel City, due to the steelworks that closed in 1999, Newcastle has now shed its industrial reputation. While it’s still the world’s largest coal-export port, the city has won numerous awards for environmental management and conservation. Local volunteers help protect the environment through the council’s Community Greening Centre program of restoration and revegetation of urban bushland and open spaces.

Newcastle is a city full of views. Watching huge coal-tankers being guided in and out of the port by tugboats makes for hypnotic viewing, and it seems that almost everywhere in Newcastle there’s something that’s a feast for the eyes. There are expansive water views from Fort Scratchley and King Edward Park, and stunning harbour views from Honeysuckle precinct and the top of the Queens Wharf Tower.

The University of Newcastle has worldwide links. Students in more than 60 countries around the world can access the University of Newcastle’s local representatives, which gives some idea of the diversity of the university’s international students. The International Office works full time creating a supportive and safe experience for international students, many of whom take up the opportunity for further study or employment in Newcastle.
Beach Life

The beaches in and around Newcastle offer endless waves for surfers, historic wrecks for scuba divers and safer sea-bath bathing for swimmers. It’s possible to walk along the harbour to Nobbys Beach and continue along past the sea baths to Newcastle Beach. You'll spot surfers in the water or checking out the conditions. South of Newcastle, Merewether’s surf beach has been gazetted as a National Surfing Reserve, making it only one of nine in New South Wales with this title. Check out the surfers during Merewether’s annual surf carnival, Surfest. Since its inception in 1985, Surfest (p11) has been giving spectators a chance to watch the world’s top pros in action.

Scuba diving and snorkelling are popular in Newcastle: sites include Flypoint, Halifax, Pipeline and around wrecks. Details on surf lessons, gear rental and other surf beaches in and around the city are listed on p18. Some companies rent out scuba gear and offer instruction and guided trips, see p18.

Dine at Scratchleys on the Wharf (p26), Nor’ East (p25) or Honeysuckle Hotel (p26), while overlooking the changing panorama of Newcastle’s working harbour

Take a lakeside stroll and check out the outdoor sculptures at the Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery (p23)

Catch up-and-coming local musicians before they hit the big time at Lizotte’s (p28) or see those who’ve made it at the Callaghan campus’s Bar on the Hill (p47)

Join Novocastrians cheering on the Newcastle Knights during a home game (p8)

Meet the friendly winemakers and sip the fruit of the vines in the lush Hunter Valley (p23)

Swim, surf, snorkel or scuba dive in the amazing waters surrounding Newcastle (p18)

Get up close and personal with Australia’s unique wildlife in Blackbutt Reserve or spot whales on a whale-watching tour (p20)

Harbourside Dining

Seaplanes skimming across the water, tugboats towing hulking coal ships that are sounding their horns, yachts from Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club, cruisers taking a spin, ferries bobbing back and forth to Stockton, and locals casting their lines: these are just some of the sights that accompany a meal at Scratchleys on the Wharf. Scratchleys opened a couple of decades ago in the old Stockton ferry terminal. It’s a ‘green restaurant’ with passive solar design, low-energy lighting and doormats made from recycled rubber tyres.

If the budget’s low, you can pick up a quality meal from the Scratchleys’ take-away window or head across the road to the old tram (Harry’s Cafe De Wheels) for some American-style takeaway (of the hot dog variety). Picnic on the grass along the foreshore and enjoy the wonderful harbourside panorama.

Lakeside Art

Lake Macquarie is Australia’s largest coastal salt-water lake – and the largest permanent salt-water lake in the southern hemisphere. Twice the size of Sydney Harbour and linked to the Tasman Sea by a channel, its 110-sq-km surface area stretches from the southern edge of Newcastle towards the Central Coast.

Yacht racing, waterskiing, kayaking and fishing are all favourite pastimes for locals heading to the lake. But it’s also a fantastic spot to have a picnic or barbeque, catch outdoor events such as Carols by Candlelight (p12) or see insightful exhibitions and striking outdoor sculptures at the Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery (p23), some 23km southeast of central Newcastle and right on the lake’s shores. While you’re there, pop next door to the art deco (and reputedly haunted) Awaba House Cafe Restaurant (p23) for a hot drink, a languid Sunday brunch or a meal to refuel for a stroll around the lake’s edge. Walking tracks fan out around the lake – after you’ve checked out those around the gallery, head to Cockle Bay and around Speers Point to Warners Bay.

For more information on the lake and gallery, pick up a map from the Newcastle Visitor Centre (p50).
Getting Musical

Newcastle prides itself on its musical life – and for good reason. Most pubs have some sort of live music and there are several dedicated music venues, including Lizotte’s – an intimate semiaoustic music venue and restaurant with a lounge-like vibe. Well-known artists perform most nights at Lizotte’s and you’ll regularly catch unsigned acts (usually on Wednesdays). Find out more on p28.

Another venue drawing in the bands is the Bar on the Hill (p47) on the University of Newcastle’s Callaghan campus. Bands including Eskimo Joe, Art vs Science and Angus & Julia Stone have made a (loud) appearance in the past few years, giving students access to terrific music without even having to leave the campus. Check www.newcastle music.com for updates on musical events in the area.

Sporting Sights

To really feel the Newcastle spirit, head to a home game of the city’s cherished National Rugby League (NRL) team, the Newcastle Knights.

Each year from autumn until spring, proud Novocastrians turn Ausgrid Stadium into a cheering sea of red and blue. Locals from all walks of life sit on ‘the hill’ – expanses of grass at either end of the stadium. The northern end is kid-friendly and alcohol-free; the other sees beer flow as the game unfolds. These general-admission tickets are cheap and, unless it’s finals time, easy to come by – just turn up and buy them at the gate. Prices rise if you want a seat in the stands.

Soccer fans can also catch Newcastle’s national A-League team, the Newcastle Jets (who train at the University of Newcastle) in action at Ausgrid Stadium from late winter through to late summer. For more details, see p28.

For those who like to be active themselves, there are two university gyms, including the stunning Forum Health & Wellness Centre opposite Newcastle Museum. Regular half- and full marathons take place in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie; local sporting clubs (including cricket and basketball) are often looking for new members.

Wineries

Head out to the Hunter Valley for a day of fine scenery and some wonderful wine tasting (this is one of the more relaxed wine-tasting areas of Australia). Once you arrive at a winery, etiquette suggests starting on the whites and continuing through to the reds, and hard as it is, it’s polite to keep the momentum going for the whole day – be as enthusiastic at the last winery as you were at the first. Remember there’s no need to drink the wine; tasting and spitting is fine. Visiting four or five wineries is probably ideal. There are plenty to choose from or you can take a tour (p23). Nondrinkers will still enjoy the relaxing surrounds and large concerts are even held at some wineries, see p23.

Wildlife

Possums and wallabies can be regularly sighted in the bushland areas of the Callaghan campus of the University of Newcastle, but to tick off more of the ‘must see’ list, head out to Blackbutt Reserve (p20). There’s a daily ‘koala encounter’, plenty of picnic spots and guided tours for groups. Whales pass by Newcastle annually, too; either join a whale-watching tour (p20) or keep your eyes out along the beaches.
Newcastle Calendar

This artistic and outgoing community knows how to party, and any time of year you’ll find something happening in and around Newcastle.

A vast range of cultural events form part of the city of Newcastle’s year-round series, livesites (www.livesites.org.au; enthusiastically tagged ‘l!vesites’). Urban public spaces in the city’s heart – including the Hunter Street Mall, Civic Park, Wheeler Place, Pacific Park, Honeysuckle Promenade, Harbour Square and Brake Block Park – host more than 100 days of mostly free events, ranging from street theatre to installations, concerts, open-air cinema and mass public dance classes such as salsa, Jamaican dancehall and disco.

Throughout the year, the University of Newcastle organises social events and activities for students, as do its sporting and social clubs (p48) – find out more from the university (p50).

The following are just a taste of the events taking place each year – to find out more about these and other activities, including one-off events, check with the university, at visitor centres or with Newcastle City Council, all of whom maintain ‘What’s On’ listings, see p50.

January
Australia Day
(www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au)
Newcastle celebrates Australia Day (26 January) with a maritime/seaside feel, so expect beach volleyball along with the fireworks.

March
Surfest
(www.surfest.com)
Newcastle’s premier annual international sporting event sees men and women ride the peeling right-handers at Merewether Beach in mid-March. See also p6.

Triathlon Festival
(www.sparkenbriatriathlon.com.au)
Around 4000 of the fittest bods from Newcastle, and further afield, compete in various swimming, cycling and running events. If you don’t want to be among them, you can cheer them on from the foreshore.

Newcastle Show
(www.newcastleshow.com.au)
Dating back to 1901, this three-day agricultural show at the Newcastle Showground has animals galore on display, as well as traditional sideshows and show fare, including clouds of fairy floss.

National Trust Heritage Festival
(www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au)
A statewide community festival celebrating New South Wales’ natural and cultural history; it’s held across metropolitan and regional centres, including various locations in and around Newcastle.

May
Darby Street Chocolate & Coffee Festival
(www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au)
Warm up for winter with decadent tastings along Darby Street on the last Sunday in May.

August
Craft & Sewing Show
(www.craftandsow.com.au)
If you’re the crafty type, head to the Newcastle Entertainment Centre for workshops and displays of crafts ranging from needlework and knitting to woodturning, toy making and floral art.

Newcastle & Hunter Jazz Festival
(www.newcastlejazz.com.au)
This weekend of doo-wop and bebop in late August has been going strong for over 25 years. It’s run by the Newcastle and Hunter Jazz Club, which organises various concerts throughout the year.

October
Mattara Festival of Newcastle
(www.mattarafestival.org.au)
Each of the nine days of Newcastle’s largest festival, held from early to mid-October, takes on a different theme, with markets, fairground rides, concerts, workshops and a grand parade.

This Is Not Art Festival
(www.thisisnotart.org)
Emerging and established writers, artists and musicians converge on Newcastle every year in early October for this groundbreaking independent arts and new-media festival.
Rainbow Festival
(www.rainbowvisions.org.au)
The Hunter region’s gay and lesbian community celebrates over two weeks in October and November with concerts, exhibitions, artist talks, information sessions, barefoot bowls, picnics (and picnic recovery nights), trivia nights and more.

Darby Street Festival
(www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au)
The second Sunday in October sees hip Darby Street closed to traffic and opened to all kinds of performers and vendors showcasing the street’s wares.

Fat as Butter
(www.fatasbutter.com.au)
A newish addition to the Newcastle music scene, this outdoor concert has international and Australian artists hip-hopping, dancing and rocking out on three different stages.

November
Taste Hamilton – Good Food Week
(www.hamiltontown.com)
Newcastle’s main ‘eat street’, Beaumont Street, celebrates all things tasty with a ‘dine in the street’ party (during which cars are kicked out and the street turns into a giant outdoor dining room), as well as kid’s dinners, a barista competition, a beer festival and lots of foodie stalls.

University of Newcastle Beach Party
(www.newcastle.edu.au)
Amid the main campus’s gum trees, 120 tonnes of sand are trucked in each November – along with three stages and top bands – for the university’s biggest party.

Bitter & Twisted International Boutique Beer Festival
(www.bitterandtwisted.com.au)
Held at the atmospheric Maitland Gaol, 40km northwest of Newcastle, over the first full weekend in November. Highlights include ‘meet the brewer’ sessions, food-and-beer matching, home brews versus the professionals’ and great music, too.

The Newcastle Poetry Prize
(http://newcastlepoetryprize.com)
Each November the winners of Australia’s leading poetry competition are announced at the Newcastle Region Art Gallery (p20), coinciding with the launch of the annual Poetry Prize anthology. Related events over the following weekend include lunch with the poets, anthology readings and discussions.

December
Art Bazaar
(www.hunterartsnetwork.org)
For one day in early December over 50 local artists sell their works in Civic Park in front of the Newcastle Region Art Gallery.

Christmas Lights Spectacular
(www.hvg.com.au)
From mid-November to mid-January (except Christmas night), the Hunter Valley Gardens, Pokolbin, are a wonderland of Christmas lights – over one million of them twinkle throughout various areas of the fragrant 24-hectare site.

Carols by Candlelight
(www.lakemac.com.au)
In the lead up to Christmas, this ever-popular family event on the shores of Lake Macquarie has carolling (featuring Santa, soap stars and other celebs), a Christmas movie, stalls, rides and costumed characters roaming about – all finished off with a fireworks display.

Boxing Day Races
(www.njc.com.au)
On 26 December, Novocastrians get dressed up to the nines, sip champagne and place their bets at the Newcastle Jockey Club’s Broadmeadow Racecourse.

New Year’s Eve
(www.ncc.nsw.gov.au)
The Newcastle harbour and Stockton foreshores (which are designated dry zones) are the places to ring in the New Year, with fireworks lighting up the sky at 9pm and midnight.

SAARA VAN RUGGE

Age 20
From Australia
Studying for a Bachelor of Design (Architecture)

Why Newcastle?
Because it has a really good reputation, and it had the degree I wanted to do. Sydney’s too busy – I think I’d get lost.

How would you describe Newcastle?
A cultural hub. It has this diverse vibe about it and it also has a beachy vibe because it’s on the coast.

What do you like most about Newcastle?
Everyone’s really friendly and relaxed. I love catching the train down and hanging out. I like Darby Street and Beaumont Street and the Harbour area. They have trendy restaurants; I really like Isobar (p28).

You’ve known the area for a while; has it changed?
Yes. Honeysuckle’s become more of a hip place to hang out and have dinner. Studying architecture I see a lot of ‘renewing’ in the city. Shops that are vacant for a while – people, artists, go in and occupy the vacant buildings.

What do you do when you’re not studying?
I love hanging at the beach all summer. In winter we go out to dinner a lot. I really like the Cambridge Hotel (p28); it’s got some great bands and a good vibe.
Newcastle has so much to see and do – so many places to eat, drink, catch live music and DJs, party, unwind and shop – that it’s impossible to cover it all in the following pages. We’ve picked out a cross-section of standout places in all of these categories, but as you discover your own favourites you’ll also unearth countless others.

One of the best ways to get your bearings – and to get your heart racing – is to climb up 180 steps to the top of the Queens Wharf Tower (Queens Wharf; admission free) for a 360-degree panorama of the city. The tower’s dome-topped cylindrical column thrusts 40.3m high; locals are quick to fill you in on its bold – and accurate – nickname. From here, pop over to Stockton on the commuter ferry; you may even come face-to-face with a massive coal ship on a quick journey across the harbour. The ferry trip, as you head back towards Newcastle, is worth the price for the views alone.

For a swooping bird’s-eye view, the seaplane commuting between Newcastle and Sydney offers an amazing panorama of the city, harbour and coast as it glides through the skies. For more information about seaplane trips, see p37.

Another good way to get an overview of the city is on either of two popular walks. The first, the Bathers Way, follows the coast for 5km, from the lighthouse at Nobbys Head (p18) via Fort Scratchley (p20) to the southern end of Merewether Beach (p6). For a historical perspective, the 3km Newcastle East Heritage Walk reveals Newcastle’s past and its architecture. Maps for both self-guided routes are available from the Newcastle Visitor Centre (p50). To further understand the city’s history, spend a few hours at the local museums; the Newcastle Maritime Museum (p20) takes you back to the shipwreck days that formed modern Newcastle, while Newcastle’s fabulous new museum – Newcastle Museum (p18) – shows off the city’s famous faces and stories.

Newcastle itself has more than enough to keep you occupied, but one of the city’s greatest assets is its proximity to some superb surrounding regions. Key places of interest within easy reach of the city are also covered in the following section. But as you explore these regions, you’ll realise discovering all the hidden corners could take a lifetime.
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES
Newcastle’s natural assets include a bounty of surf beaches that are among the best in Australia (which, for a country with some 37,000km of coastline, is really saying something), as well as lush bushland. The city is also a hotbed of culture, with galleries and museums galore and plenty of historical points of interest.

Beaches
Curving around Nobbys Head at Newcastle’s northeastern tip, Nobbys Beach is one of the city’s prettiest stretches of coast. Surfers flock to the northern end to tackle the fast left-hander known as the Wedge. Around the corner a wonderful multicoloured art deco facade hides ocean baths (sea-filled swimming pools).

To the east, expansive Newcastle Beach is great for swimming and surfing. South of Newcastle Beach, below majestic Norfolk Pine–shaded King Edward Park, the convict-carved Bogey Hole is Australia’s oldest ocean bath. You can scramble around the rocks and under the headland to Susan Gilmore Beach where swimwear is optional (which means not encouraged).

Heading south brings you to Bar Beach and then to Dixon Park Beach, both of which are popular with swimmers and surfers. South again, Merewether Beach is Newcastle’s most consistent and most famous surfing beach, and the home of Australia’s biggest surfing contest, Surfest (see p6 and p11). The ocean baths here measure a whopping 100m by 50m.

Surfing & Scuba Diving
Newcastle is a true surfer’s paradise and has much to offer scuba divers, too. Plenty of places offer surfing lessons, while those keen to learn to scuba dive can get qualified, or, if qualified, head out on organised excursions.


Museums & Galleries
Newcastle Museum (02 4974 1400; www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au; Workshop Way, Honey-suckle) is a modern, lively museum with an interactive science centre, Supernova, and a steel-focussed sound and light display. It features a wall of famous Newcastle faces and small sections on the city’s Indigenous, European and natural history.

Nobbys Head
Nobbys was joined to the mainland in 1846 to create a singularly pretty sand spit. The one-time island was named Whibay Gamba by local Aboriginal people, whose stories tell of a kangaroo that jumped for safety from what’s now Fort Scratchley (p20) and now remains deep within the land, occasionally thumping its tail and trembling the earth. Nobbys was twice its current height before being reduced to 28m in 1855 to keep the wind in ships’ sails as they turned into the harbour. It’s an exhilarating walk along the spit towards the lighthouse as you listen to the waves crash ashore.
A historic former shipping warehouse on the waterfront is home to the *Newcastle Maritime Museum* (02 4929 2588; www.maritimecentrenewcastle.org.au; 3 Honey-suckle Dr). It’s well worth the modest entry fee to explore its maritime memorabilia, including haunting audiovisual stories of ships lost at sea.

The *Lock-up Cultural Centre* (02 4925 2265; www.thelockup.info; 90 Hunter St) incorporates the Police Museum, prison cells (check out the padded one) and the John Paynter Gallery.

In the heart of the city, next door to the stately Newcastle Region Library, the *Newcastle Region Art Gallery* (02 4974 5100; www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/nag; Laman St; admission free) hosts major travelling exhibitions and has works by eminent Australian artists, including Brett Whiteley, Sidney Nolan, Russell Drysdale and more.

*Watt Space* (02 4921 8733; www.newcastle.edu.au/group/watt-space; cnr King & Auckland Sts), in central Newcastle, is a large and vibrant gallery exhibiting the work of the University of Newcastle’s current students.

On Lake Macquarie, you’ll find the *Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery* (p23). While Newcastle itself has a swag of smaller art galleries dotted around town, such as the avant-garde *Forsight Gallery* (02 4904 222 297; www.forsight.com.au; 33 Union St). Temporary galleries have also sprung up throughout the city centre as part of the Renew Newcastle project (see boxed text below).

For more on the university’s galleries, see p41.

**Fort Scratchley**
Occupying one of Newcastle’s best vantage points, *Fort Scratchley* (02 4974 5033; www.fortscratchley.com.au; Nobbys Rd; admission free) sits on a large knoll overlooking Nobbys Head and the river mouth. In 1843, the army began using the site as a training ground. In 1870, responding to the colony’s fears of a Russian invasion, it was decided that Newcastle was of strategic importance as a coal and steel producer and would need proper fortification. The fort, designed by Lt-Col Peter Scratchley, was completed in 1886; it was upgraded in the 20th century and played a vital role in defending the city when a Japanese submarine attacked Newcastle on 8 June 1942. A free map will guide you around the barracks and defence structures, but if you want to investigate the underground maze of tunnels, you must join one of the (inexpensive) hour-long tours.

**Wildlife**
Set in a 182-hectare bushland reserve, *Blackbutts Reserve* (02 4904 3344; www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/recreation/blackbutts_reserve; Carnley Ave, Kotara; admission free) is beloved by the young and young-at-heart for its nature trails, wildlife exhibits, playgrounds and native animals, including koalas, wombats, emus and kangaroos.

The *Hunter Wetlands Centre* (02 4951 6466; www.wetlands.org.au; 412 Sandgate Rd, Sandgate), near Sandgate train station, was born out of a bid to stop the highway storming through the guts of this site. Now its 45 hectares of swampy wonderland are home to over 250 wildlife species. Take time out for a bush-fusion lunch at the centre’s café; don’t forget to use mosquito repellent while walking, cycling or canoeing.

From May to October, you can whale watch on Newcastle harbour with *N’Joy* (02 4959 5600; www.carecat.com.au).

To find out about hand-feeding sharks at Port Stephens, see p23.

**RENEW NEWCASTLE**
Why let buildings sit empty when artists need studios? That’s the philosophy of *Renew Newcastle* (www.renewnewcastle.org). This not-for-profit organisation finds disused city-centre buildings or buildings awaiting redevelopment, which are then used and maintained by artists and community groups, filling otherwise vacant spaces with fashion, art, digital, multimedia and much more. Since it began, shops like *Make Space* (www.makespace.com.au), which sells locally made craft, jewellery and clothes, have so far had three or more different homes, and, thanks to Renew’s philosophy, will have quite a few more! This does make tracking spaces difficult, but a map of Renew Newcastle participants is available for download from the website, or you can check in at *Renew HQ* (3 Morgan St), off Hunter St in the former St Marks Catholic Church.
Stockton Bight
A scenic five-minute ferry ride (or less scenic 20km road trip) from Newcastle's foreshore is Stockton. It sits at the southern end of 32km-long Stockton Bight, the largest constantly shifting dune mass in the southern hemisphere. Several companies will take you sandboarding, including Dawsons Scenic Tours (02 4982 0602; www.portstephensadventure.com.au) and Moonshadow 4WD Tours (02 4984 4760; www.moonshadow4wd.com.au).

AROUND NEWCASTLE
The area surrounding Newcastle is filled with once-in-a-lifetime opportunities including whale and dolphin spotting, shark feeding and hot-air ballooning. Or you can simply relax on a winery tour. There are tour operators who can help you get out there and plenty to do once you’re there.

Port Stephens
Beyond Stockton Bight at the mouth of Port Stephens – a huge natural harbour stretching 20km inland – sits Nelson Bay. Between May and November some 9000 migratory whales pass by. You can spot whales at sea, as well as dolphins, with Moonshadow Cruises (02 4984 9388; www.moonshadow.com.au). And, if you’re game, you can pat, hold and hand-feed sharks, as well as rays and fish at the Australian Shark & Ray Centre (02 4982 2476; www.ozsharkandray.com.au; 686 Marsh Rd, Bobs Farm, Port Stephens).

Lake Macquarie
Southeast of Newcastle, immense Lake Macquarie is another popular outdoor playground for locals, see p7. At the lake’s edge, the Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery (02 4965 8260; www.lakemac.com.au; 1a First St, Booragul; admission free) curates evocative themed exhibitions centred on key pieces from its permanent collection of paintings, sculpture and photography by renowned contemporary Australian artists. Many artists are from the surrounding region, with Indigenous artists strongly represented. Touring exhibitions also regularly stop here. Adjacent to the gallery you’ll find historic Awaba House Cafe restaurant (02 4950 6366; www.waterfrontvenuesnewcastle.com.au; 1a First St, Booragul).

Central Coast
Sprawling from the Hawkesbury River to just south of Newcastle, New South Wales’ Central Coast region encompasses idyllic lakes, national parks, state forests and conservation areas, small inland towns and laidback beach communities. Some of the Central Coast’s highlights include the towns of Pearl Beach, Avoca Beach, Mac-Masters Beach, Copacabana, Terrigal and Shelly Beach. See www.visitcentralcoast.com.au for information on what’s going on in this area, midway between Newcastle and Sydney.

ENCOUNTERING AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE
No, despite what Steve Irwin would have had you believe, Australia is not overrun with creepy-crawlies, nor is it awash with sharks. If you do want to have a close encounter with these creatures, head to dedicated reserves and conservation centres such as those listed on p20.
EATING
The line between places to eat and drink is often blurred in Newcastle, with many venues doing both admirably. Head to Darby Street for funky cafes, Honeysuckle Drive for swanky spots with water views, Hunter Street and Newcastle East for casual eateries, and Beaumont Street for a plethora of international cuisine choices. For markets and groceries, see p28 and p32.

Quick Eats
Estabar (02 4927 1222; cnr Ocean St & Shortland Esplanade; budget) Overlooking Newcastle Beach, this is the best spot in town for breakfast and all-day snacks, including marinated feta on sourdough toast, gelati and sublime Spanish-style hot chocolate with hazelnuts. Great coffee, too.
Sprocket Roasters (02 4009 1237; 68 Hunter St; budget) Take a vintage seat in this fabulous space-age corner shop and grab a bargain breakfast (avocado and tomato on sourdough, perhaps) or lunch. Before moving on, buy a bag of Sprocket trail mix for those long study days. Also runs a coffee school.
Frankies Place (02 4925 3470; 133 Darby St, Cooks Hill; budget to midrange) A wall full of record covers welcomes the hungry to Frankies, which does a great job of offering a range of salads and other healthy (and less healthy) morsels. There’s a choice of indoor/outdoor seating – choose the bench seat under the verandah for a perfect people-watching position.
3 Monkeys (02 4926 3779; 131 Darby St; midrange) Sure, they do Asian-inspired food here too, but it’s hard to go past one of three monkeys’ (as it's known) milkshakes or thickshakes. It’s a terrific spot to catch up with friends, with upstairs seating, a rear courtyard and street dining to choose from.
Rolador (02 4969 1786; 1 Beaumont St, Hamilton; budget to midrange) This funky indoor/outdoor cafe has terrific coffee, available to take away from the cute hatch at the cafe’s side. It’s ideally positioned by the station for that morning caffeine fix or delicious burrito breakfast.
Goldbergs (02 4929 3122; 137 Darby St; budget to midrange) Inside, this Darby Street stalwart’s dark walls, ripped black vinyl sofas, artworks and wax-covered candelabras create a boho feel, while outside the sun-dappled courtyard is shaded by palm trees. Wholesome mains include tofu burgers and Israeli couscous, or just drop in for coffee and freshly made cakes.
Scotties (02 4926 3780; 36 Scott St; budget to midrange) Cafes don’t come better than this. You can order at Scotties’ takeaway window or dine inside this renovated terrace house on fresh-as-it-gets fish and chips, salt-and-pepper squid, huge burgers (including lentil burgers) and old-fashioned milkshakes. The evening menu is stylishly presented, chalked on a blackboard.
International
Mon’s on Beaumont (02 4940 0734; 1/86 Beaumont St; budget) Mon’s may be low on decor, but it’s also low on price, which makes this Thai restaurant a favourite with students. Offers classic Thai dishes ranging from pad thai to tom kha gai, all for $10 during lunch.
Raj’s Corner (02 4962 1827; 116 Beaumont St; budget to midrange) Tandoori chicken tikka, a huge range of vegetarian and meat curries, and homemade Indian ice cream see this aromatic spot packed with hungry diners. Also has a branch on Darby Street.
Sticky Rice Thai (02 4927 0200; 19 Scott St; budget to midrange) Brilliant beach-style red, green and Penang curries, steaming noodles and its namesake sticky rice (served in a bamboo basket) are bargain-priced during lunch. It’s licensed (with five beers on tap) and BYO.
Banyan Tree (02 4961 4257; 39 Beaumont St; midrange) Bolts of brightly coloured fabric glittering with iridescent thread adorn this Balinese restaurant. Chef’s specials might include kari ikan laut (seafood curry with jasmine rice), gule kambing (spiced slow- braised lamb) or ayam pelalah (grilled chicken breast with kaffir lime leaf).
Delucas Pizza (02 4929 3555; 159b Darby St; midrange) Of an evening Delucas dishes up comforting Italian classics in a cosy, familial setting.
Top End
Nor’ East (02 4929 6444; 150 Wharf Rd; top end) This well-awarded harbourside restaurant does fresh, seasonal food beautifully. Come here for very special ‘mod Australian’

Why did you choose the University of Newcastle?
I was in Melbourne before coming to Newcastle, and actually Newcastle was a cheaper option for me. In the cost of living and the study itself, it’s a much cheaper option.

How about the environment?
Kuala Lumpur is busy...when I went to Melbourne it quietened down a bit, and people were saying ‘Newcastle is a jungle, you’re not going to like it, you’re a city boy’, but I liked it when I came here. The environment is very conducive to studying.

How is the social life?
I am president of the Malaysian Club and we’ve got 500 Malaysians here. We do a lot of events, like a welcoming party, when we get all the new Malaysians to come. We also have a Malaysian night – our biggest event of the year.

Have you learnt new skills in Newcastle?
Newcastle’s got one of the top surf beaches in the world. I’m trying to learn how to surf – I’ve got a bodyboard, and I’ve been practising on my friends’ surfboards too.

Newcastle in two words?
Exciting, beautiful.
lunches and dinners, and expect starters like lemon-and-parsley-crumbed western Australian sardines and mains of house-butchered suckling pork.

**East End Enoteca (02 4925 2244; 14 Pacific St; midrange)** At this enchanting little Parisian-style wine bar, with navy-blue wicker chairs strewn over the pavement, they take wine so seriously that they even get the new vintage of Beaujolais air-freighted from France each November. You can order small, tapas-style dishes to accompany wines by the glass or order a meal from the small but stellar menu.

**Nagisa (02 4929 4122; 1 Honeysuckle Dr; midrange)** In streamlined premises overlooking the swish Honeysuckle waterfront, the sizzling hot plate at Nagisa's teppan-yaki bar turns out thinly sliced meats, crispy veggies, bite-sized seafood portions and crunchy (but not too crunchy) fried rice. Other Japanese specialities include udon noodles, sushi, sashimi and soba salad.

**Scratchleys (02 4929 1111; 200 Wharf Rd; top end)** A romantic spot for lunch or dinner: Port Stephens oysters, say, followed by Singapore chilli–style blue swimmer crab or local lobster, finished off with Scratchleys’ Chocolaty Nemesis (rich chocolate cake with sour cherry compote and King Island cream) or palm-sugar-rolled banana strudel, accompanied by Hunter Valley wines. Inexpensive takeaways are available out front. See also p7.

**ENTERTAINMENT & NIGHTLIFE**

There’s always somewhere to go for a bit of ‘time out’ in Newcastle, from state-of-the-art cinemas and modern waterfront pubs to classic cinemas and original ‘sticky carpet’ pubs with live music.

**Bars & Clubs**

Many of Newcastle’s pubs, bars and clubs offer live or recorded music, or both. The bars around Hunter Street are popular with students and heave during term time, peaking on student night (Wednesday night). Glamorous types congregate at the bars along Honeysuckle wharf. Pick up a copy of Reverb (www.reverbstreetpress.com) or Drum Media (www.themusic.com.au) to find out what’s on around town.

**Honeysuckle Hotel (02 4929 2307; www.honeysucklehotel.com.au; Lee Wharf C, Honeysuckle Dr)** Perched on the harbour’s edge, this hotel is hard to miss: just look for the throngs dining and drinking on the outdoor deck overlooking the harbour. Sports fans will appreciate that it boasts Newcastle’s biggest TV screen.

**Beaches Hotel (02 4963 1574; www.thebeachhotel.com.au; cnr Frederick & Ridge Sts, Merewether)** Opening onto a huge verandah, this quintessential Newcastle pub overlooks the beach rocks and has live local bands most nights.
**Reading Cinemas** (02 4032 1150; www.readingcinemas.com.au; 30 Pearson St, Charlestown) shows first-release movies and boasts eight screens.

**Sports Grounds**

The 26,164-capacity AMSG Stadium on Turton Road is the home ground of both the [Newcastle Knights](http://www.newcastleknights.com.au) rugby league team and the [Newcastle Jets](http://www.newcastlejets.com.au) soccer team. See also p8.

**Shopping**

Newcastle has a full spectrum of shops, from small, one-off boutiques to massive malls in the suburbs, such as [Westfield Kotara](http://www.westfield.com.au; cnr Northcott Dr & Park Ave) and, 6km south of Newcastle, its newest mall, [Charlestown Square](http://www.charlestownsquare.com.au), which offers three levels of shopping.

The biggest mall in the city centre is [Marketown Shopping Centre](http://marketown.com.au; King St). It incorporates two large supermarkets (Woolworths and Coles) that are open seven days a week, a major department store, a gym and many specialty shops.

Over 80 stalls showcase the works of Newcastle's artisans at the Olive Tree Market (www.theolivetreemarket.com.au) on the first Saturday of the month at The Junction Public School (rain, hail or shine). The Newcastle City Farmers & Craft Market (www.newcastlecityfarmersmarket.com.au) sets up on most Sundays at the Newcastle Showground or Broadmeadow Showground.

The Junction, around the intersection of Glebe and Union Streets near Merewether, is home to upmarket boutiques. Along Darby Street you’ll find shops such as Ramjet (02 4926 2839; www.ramjet.net.au; 78 Darby St), selling the newest, hottest streetwear from the UK, Brazil and beyond; Blackbird Corner (02 4929 4350; http://blackbirdcorner.blogspot.com; 70 Darby St), stocking quirky, locally made homewares and trinkets; the flagship store of flamboyant fashion label High Tea with Mrs Woo (02 4926 4883; www.highteawithmrswoo.com.au; 74 Darby St; see also p44); and quality secondhand literature and records at Cooks Hill Books & Records (02 4929 5079; 72 Darby St).

**Theatres & Cinemas**

In a grand 1920s art deco building with marble foyers and a chandeliered auditorium, the 1520-seat Civic Theatre (02 4974 2166; www.civictheatrenewcastle.com.au; 375 Hunter St) hosts theatre, musicals, concerts and dance.

The central multiplex Greater Union Cinemas (02 4926 2233; www.greaterunion.com.au; 183-185 King St) screens first-release movies and art-house films.

**BUNTARIK JAIKRAJANG**

- **Age 33**
- **From Thailand**
- **Studying for a PhD in Accounting and Finance**

**What do you like about Newcastle?**

The weather: it’s not very cold, not very hot. Also Newcastle is a good place to study – it’s not crowded. When we feel stressed we can see the sea and scenery.

**Favourite place to eat?**

We have plenty of Thai restaurants in Newcastle. For me, I prefer Mon’s (p25), because the price fits my pocket.

**Have you seen much of Australia?**

I’ve travelled to the Gold Coast and Brisbane; they’re easy to get to. I go to Sydney, but for me it’s crowded, like Bangkok in Thailand! That’s why I like Newcastle: you have time to focus on your study.

**Has it been hard to learn English?**

It’s not been easy for me, but Newcastle Uni provides PhD students with many courses, like writers’ circle, to practise our English. My friend joined Zumba dancing – she said you can exercise, make friends and practise your speaking. But I prefer playing sport like badminton. We have the Forum (p48); it’s affordable and I can swim there and play badminton.
With a wide variety of international students and migrants making Newcastle their home, there’s a growing range of services and facilities to meet their needs. The following lists will get you started; for more information on the facilities, shops and organisations you will find in and around Newcastle check with the International clubs at the University of Newcastle through NUSA (Newcastle University Students Association Inc.) and UoN Services, the organisation that provides common meeting grounds and social centres for students of the university.
STAYING HEALTHY

The Hunter New England Local Health District’s Multicultural Health Headquarters (02 4924 6285; 2nd fl, Harker Bldg, Wallsend) works to ensure that people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds stay healthy by offering an interpreter service, multicultural health liaison and Refugee Health Clinic. There’s also a Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC) in New South Wales, see www.dhi.gov.au for more information.

Shopping

Most of Newcastle’s Asian food outlets obtain their produce from Sydney. If you’re after something in particular, ask shop staff and see if they can order it in for you.

HALAL MEAT

Georgetown Butchers (02 4967 7888; Shop 2, 40 Georgetown Rd, Georgetown)


ASIAN GROCERS

AKK Asian Groceries (02 4929 7883; 643 Hunter St, Newcastle)

House of Asia Shop (02 4951 2579; Stockland Jesmond)

Asia Pacific Grocery (02 4955 9083; 92a Nelson St, Wallsend)

Bunsom Thai Groceries Shop (02 4017 714 378; 92 Beaumont St, Hamilton) Can order in Asian groceries from Sydney on request.

Raj’s Corner (02 4961 3862; cnr Beaumont & James Sts, Hamilton) Neighbouring the well-known Indian restaurant, this shop sells Indian ingredients, clothes and more.

Places of Worship

There are a variety of places of worship in Newcastle, including a mosque and synagogue. Religious groups at the University of Newcastle include UoN Bible Study, the Baha’i Society, the Islamic Society and Newcastle Baha’i Society, Campus Christian Movement of Newcastle include UoN Bible Study, the Synagogue. Religious groups at the University

International Buddhist Cham Shan Temple of Australia (02 4973 2618; www.chamshan.org.au; 55 Freemans Dr, Morriset)

Jesmond Park Uniting Church (02 4957 4566; 15 Robert St, Jesmond)

International Christian Church (02 4968 2816; www.icnewcastle.com; 37 Queen St, Warahat West)

Newcastle Hebrew Congregation (02 4953 9798; 122 Tyrell St, Newcastle)

Newcastle Mosque (www.newcastlemosque.com; 6 Metcalfe St, Wallsend) There is a prayer room at TAFE on the Newcastle campus, Tighes Hill and on the University of Newcastle’s Callaghan campus.

Newcastle Sikh Association (37 Martin St, Shortland)

Cultural & Community Groups

Many international communities have representation or community clubs in Sydney, including the Chinese and Thai communities; the following have links in Newcastle.

Ethnic Community Council Newcastle (ECC) (02 4960 8248; http://eccnewcastle.org.au; 3 Illalung Ave, Wallsend) Provides services for the multicultural community of the region.

Hellenic Community and Cultural Centre of Newcastle (02 4961 2333; www.hcc-newcastle.com; 11-17 Steel St, Hamilton) This Greek taverna is also a cultural centre that organises Greek school for children and Greek lessons for adults.

Hunter African Communities Council (HACC) (02 4932 940 427; www.africancommunity.org.au; PO Box 7, Hamilton) Offers employment assistance and social opportunities for African Australians.


Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre (02 4965 5291; www.mncinc.org.au; 3 Illalung Rd, Lambton) Offers free conversational English classes, runs multicultural playgroup sessions for children and has a multicultural social group.

Newcastle Chinese Association (02 4961 3288; 67 Maitland Rd, Islington) This representative body for the Chinese community organises social and cultural events, and provides support services.

Northern Settlement Services (02 4969 3399; www.nsservices.com.au; 8 Chaucer St, Hamilton) Multilingual service offering settlement assistance to people of a non-English-speaking background.

Saudi Students Club in Newcastle (www.sacm.org.au/english-website/index.html) Caters to the needs of Saudi students and works to facilitate their educational pathways from start to finish.

Multicultural Media

RADIO

The University of Newcastle’s radio station, Radio 2NUR-FM (103.7FM), broadcasts a range of programs in different languages in the evenings, including Polish/Dutch, Indonesian, Ukrainian, Chinese, Macedonian, Tongan, Samoan and Swahili. Check the schedule at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/2nurfm/on-air/schedule.html.

NEWSPAPERS

Ethnic newspapers, including Indian, Indonesian, Korean, Chinese and Thai, are another link into Australia’s multicultural community. Check the list at www.crc.nsw.gov.au/ethnic_media/newspapers for details; some of the shops listed on p32 also sell these newspapers.

Other Clubs & Businesses

A variety of groups and businesses catering for different nationalities exist in and around Newcastle itself.

African Queen Parlour Hair Beauty and Fashion (02 4961 6713; 99 Maitland Rd, Islington)

Australian Tai Chi Institute (02 4963 7421; http://australiantaichiinstitute.com.au; cnr Belford St & Torpet Pl, Broadmeadow) Runs between two and four tai chi classes daily on weekdays.

Aikido Kenyu Kai Int (02 4961 4493; Young Rd, Broadmeadow)


Indo-Newcastle Australia Network This network is run through Facebook and connects Indonesian students who are studying in Newcastle.


Saturday Language School (Urdu) (Calaghan College, Macquarie St, Wallsend)

INTERNATIONAL CLUBS ON CAMPUS

NUSA lists the following international on-campus clubs:

- African Students Society
- Chinese Christian Initiative
- Chinese Culture Association
- ELICOS Society (English Language Centre)
- Indonesian Students Society
- International Students for Social Equity
- Korean IEN group
- Malaysian Youth Society
- Pacific Islander Students Society
- Saudi Students Association
- Singapore Students Society
- Taiwanese Sweet Potato
- Thai Student Association
If you were to write a wish list of the ideal characteristics of a city in which to study, Newcastle would tick all the boxes: big enough to be a vibrant social, artistic and sporting hub; small enough to have a welcoming community feel; a serene environment amid some of Australia’s most spectacular natural scenery; and a breeze to get around.

The University of Newcastle is a cornerstone of the city’s cultural landscape, with more than 36,000 students making up its overall student body. The majority of the university’s students attend the main campus, delightfully located in the midst of 140 hectares of natural bushland on the city’s fringe in the suburb of Callaghan. Served by its own train station as well as buses, it’s close to the freeway; students commonly car pool and parking is available (for a small daily fee or a discounted yearly rate).

In central Newcastle, the university’s city campus, University House, is home to the Newcastle Business School, the University of Newcastle’s Conservatorium of Music and the University of Newcastle Legal Centre.

### UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE VITAL STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>36,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of international students</td>
<td>7400 from more than 80 countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian ranking</td>
<td>Ranked within the top 10 of Australia’s 39 universities for research funding and performance. It scores highly for biomedical and biotechnological sciences and biomedical and clinical health sciences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International ranking</td>
<td>In 2011 an independent audit of the University of Newcastle by London-based QS Stars delivered a top rating of 5 stars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of bachelor-degree graduates aged under 25 who find employment within four months</td>
<td>75% (100% in the fields of electrical engineering and geology).</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Bachelor graduates aged under 25 from the University of Newcastle are paid more than the national average for their first professional job.
Newcastle is a relaxed and safe city. Still, it’s nice to know that someone is on hand to respond to any concerns (safety or otherwise) you may have at any time of the day. Whether on campus or off campus, during university hours or after hours, the University of Newcastle works hard to ensure that international students can obtain personal assistance and helps to resolve any worries they may have. Through the Student Assistance Line, any student with problems, including what they might think are minor ones, can call 1800 081 233 and have an instant, personal response. Safety on campus is also a priority, with emergency phones at convenient locations, a free security shuttle bus service and security escort services for students working late on campus.

Facilities on all campuses include cafeterias, bookshops and stationery supplies; see also p47. The university has extensive, top-of-the-line sporting facilities. There are also 85 sporting and social clubs and societies at the Newcastle campus and 24 clubs and societies at the Central Coast campus. For more information, see p47. The full list of sporting groups and social clubs is at www.uonservices.org.au. Clubs and societies range from ju-jitsu, scuba diving, anime and medieval to more traditional groups.

Due to the large proportion of Newcastle residents who are students or staff at the university, the institution is a linchpin of the general community. As well as the Conservatorium, which puts on public shows in the city and its surrounds.

On the following pages, you can find out more about the university and student life in the city and its surrounds.

TRAVEL PLANNING
Both Sydney and Newcastle airports have ATMs, but Newcastle Airport doesn’t have currency-changing facilities.

Getting There & Away
AIR
Newcastle has its own airport at Williamtown (p50), about 35 minutes’ drive from both Newcastle city centre and the Callaghan campus. Aeropelican and Qantas run flights between Sydney and Williamtown (45 minutes), while airlines including Jetstar and Virgin Australia serve other Australian cities. Bear in mind that the baggage allowances on domestic routes are less than on international routes – check ahead with the airline.

Port Stephens Coaches (p50) operates a public bus service from Newcastle Airport to Newcastle train station up to 11 times a day (fewer on weekends and public holidays) plus services to Port Stephens’ Nelson Bay area. A shuttle bus can drop you at the university.

For an even quicker trip by air between central Sydney and Newcastle you can catch a seaplane, see boxed text below.

BUS
The university provides a free transport service for new students who make their way to Newcastle by plane or train. The service collects students from either Newcastle Airport or Newcastle train station and transfers them to either their initial accommodation or to the university. This service is available from Sydney Airport for students attending the Central Coast campus at Ourimbah. For students travelling from Sydney Airport to Newcastle, the Happy Cabby bus service is available to international students at a discounted rate by booking online. This transport option is a good idea if you have lots of luggage and costs approximately $70.

TRAIN
CityRail trains run regularly from Sydney Airport to Sydney’s Central Station, where trains depart for Newcastle and Ourimbah on the Central Coast. The journey takes just over one hour to Ourimbah and around two-and-a-half hours from Central Station to Newcastle. See also p50.

Getting Around
Travelling around Newcastle, including to and from the university, is quick and easy, with little traffic and no crowds. The campuses are readily accessible by bus or train; all students are issued with bus and train schedules on arrival.

INSIDE THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
The university was first established in 1951 as Newcastle University College, under the authority of the then University of Technology New South Wales (now the University of New South Wales). Strong local support saw it become autonomous in 1965, and renamed as the University of Newcastle. The university’s Autonony Day – a huge social event held each July – actually celebrates an earlier winning of autonomy, by the University of Technology from the Public Service Board (1 July 1954), but it’s a good excuse for a party in any case.

SYDNEY BY SEAPLANE
Harbour to harbour, it takes just 30 minutes to fly between Lee Wharf on Honeysuckle Drive in Newcastle to Lyne Park in Rose Bay in Sydney’s eastern suburbs, with mesmerising views along the way. And if you’re heading for the city centre, it’s good to know that seaplane flights coincide with Sydney Ferries’ regular service from Rose Bay to Circular Quay, with a journey time of approximately 10 minutes. During the week there are two seaplane flights per day in each direction. There’s generally a 10kg baggage limit. Prices vary, but one way costs from $225. For contact details, see p50.
Fields of Study
The University of Newcastle offers a diverse range of courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels through its faculties and their schools.

Based at the city campus, the Faculty of Business and Law spans the Newcastle Business School and Newcastle Law School. The Faculty of Education and Arts encompasses the School of Drama, Fine Art & Music (incorporating the Conservatorium), the School of Education and the School of Humanities and Social Science.

In the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment are the School of Architecture and the Built Environment, the School of Engineering and the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

The Faculty of Health takes in the School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy, the School of Health Sciences, the School of Medicine and Public Health, and the School of Nursing and Midwifery.

One of the university’s best-known faculties is the Faculty of Science and Information Technology, incorporating the School of Design, Communication and IT, the School of Environmental and Life Sciences, the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, and the School of Psychology.

The English Language and Foundation Studies Centre is the place for Foundation Studies Students, International Foundation Students and English Language Students.

You can search the full range of programs and areas of study on the university’s website, see p50.

Other Campuses
The university’s Central Coast campus is at Ourimbah, 70km south of Newcastle and 80km north of Sydney (less than an hour’s drive from Sydney’s northern districts), and less than 15 minutes from beautiful beaches and bushland. It’s located in a valley with a rainforest creek and, along with local businesses, shares grounds with TAFE NSW Hunter Institute and the Central Coast Community College; it’s a living laboratory for environmental sustainability with a diverse mix of people. Like the university’s Newcastle campus, it’s within walking distance from the train station, has direct bus services from surrounding suburbs and is close to the freeway, with free parking on the grounds.

Courses offered only at the Central Coast campus include Oral Health, Podiatry, Early Childhood Teaching, Management, Food Science and Human Nutrition, as well as majors within the Bachelor of Science program of Sports Science, Marine Science and Sustainable Resource Management.

CITY CONNECTION
John Forbes – Professor of Surgical Oncology at the University of Newcastle & Director of the Department of Surgical Oncology at Calvary Mater Newcastle
In 2007 Professor John Forbes was recognised as one of the top 10 researchers in the world. Professor Forbes receives significant funding from the Cancer Institute NSW for his breast-cancer trials, which are changing clinical practice in breast-cancer treatment. Professor Forbes leads an internationally acclaimed research team, many of whom are graduates of the University of Newcastle.

SEUNG BEOM WOO
» Age 36
» From Korea
» Studying for a Bachelor of Physiotherapy

What made you choose the University of Newcastle?
I compared the price of [studying] here and the US, and here was cheaper. Actually, they have a really good reputation in my degree for this course.

Have you learnt new skills since coming here?
Fishing and golfing are the major parts; I’ve learnt how to do them. It’s hard to find a fishing spot where I lived [in Korea], and golf was too expensive. Now I really enjoy them.

What’s your favourite restaurant?
Raj’s Corner on Beaumont Street (p25) is my favourite and Banyan Tree (p25) is a really good one, too.

Two words to describe Newcastle?
Balanced living.

UNIVERSITY ART
You know you’re in an artistic environment when the city’s university has not just one gallery of its own, but two. Watt Space (cnr Auckland & King Sts) is a contemporary art space in central Newcastle that exhibits work from current University of Newcastle students, see p20. Students get experience in all aspects of exhibiting, curating and gallery management, including printing and mailing invitations, writing and distributing press releases, organising catering, and financial and administrative matters. Students are also involved with the University Art Gallery (Callaghan campus), which hosts national and international exhibitions.
Further afield is the University of Newcastle’s Port Macquarie campus (with a selection of part-time and full-time degree programs), as well as the Sydney CBD campus (for postgraduate business education and Masters degrees in Business and Professional Accounting). Overseas, the University of Newcastle’s Singapore campus has a range of programs on offer through PSB Academy, including Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Engineering.

**Postgraduate Study**

For those who’d like access to information about courses of postgraduate study there is GradSchool, Australia’s number one school for postgraduate studies and coursework online. For a comprehensive listing of the University of Newcastle’s online postgraduate degree programs and courses visit www.gradschool.com.au.

**Hands-on Experience Leading to Careers**

It’s often possible to gain hands-on experience while studying at the University of Newcastle. In many cases, work experience is an assessable component of degree programs and gives graduates prior experience (and a competitive edge) when entering the workforce. For example, all programs offered by the Faculty of Health include assessed clinical experience, with placements conducted in public hospitals throughout New South Wales; Education students gain classroom experience culminating in a 10-week internship in either a secondary or primary school; Art students are given opportunities for solo exhibitions (see also p41) and internships are offered at the Art Gallery of NSW; Engineering students often complete projects in conjunction with industry partners and also gain 12 weeks’ industrial experience; and Science students take part in problem-based learning, field trips, excursions, seminar presentations and workshops.

**LINKING WITH CHINA**

Extending international links is the university’s Confucius Institute (www.newcastle.edu.au/institute/confucius-institute). This partnership with the Office of the Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) and Huazhong Normal University is designed to advance the understanding of, and engagement with, Chinese language and culture. It offers Chinese language classes to beginners, tai chi and classes on Chinese culture at the university’s Callaghan campus.

**DAPHNE CHIWAYA**

- Age 24
- From Zimbabwe
- Studying for a Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Laws

**What were your first thoughts of Newcastle?**

I thought it was conveniently positioned: a two-hour trip to Sydney if you’re after ‘busy’, and an hour to the Hunter Valley for leisure and wineries. And the beach! I like Nobbys and the beach baths.

**Where do you live?**

I’ve lived in International House for four years. There are a lot of different students from different countries there, but they always mix groups up, so you’re forced to meet people from other countries.

**Was it easy to find work?**

I work as an admin assistant at the Callaghan campus of the university. The international support to find work is very, very helpful. They help you with the application process.

**What will you miss when you leave?**

I’m going to miss the nice, laid-back people. When I first came everyone was helpful, so I wasn’t afraid to ask for help or ask questions.

**Newcastle in a word?**

Convenient.
For programs where work experience isn’t included, the university’s careers service helps students secure summer-holiday work placements. For those ready to begin their career, this service assists with resume building, job applications and linking students to the job market through career expos and on-campus employer information sessions (see http://newcastle.edu.au/service/careers/contact.html). There are careers/student support offices at the Callaghan campus in Newcastle and the Ourimbah campus on the Central Coast. Students at the Port Macquarie campus can access the TAFE Careers and Counselling Service.

Finding a Home in Newcastle

Life as a student in Newcastle is as varied as the students who study here. Accommodation options include on-campus residential colleges (which fill up quickly – apply early); renting a unit, apartment or house off-campus by yourself or with family and/or friends; renting a room in a share house; and living with a host family in a home stay (great for anyone looking to improve their English).

The University of Newcastle’s accommodation service, on both the main campus and the Central Coast campus, has application forms for on-campus housing, maintains an interactive database of current off-campus accommodation options and provides ongoing support. Check www.newcastle.edu.au/service/accommodation for information and assistance.

On Campus

A comprehensive orientation program introducing new students to the university takes place prior to the beginning of each semester (or trimester), where students can pick up more information about the university and course enrolment procedures, with specific information for international students, such as arranging medical insurance, banking and tax. Teaching timetables, lists of required texts and student identity cards are issued at the same time.
The University of Newcastle’s student associations – the Newcastle University Students Association (NUSA), the Newcastle University Postgraduate Students Association (NUPSA) at the Callaghan campus and the Central Coast Campus Union (CCCU) – are great points of contact once you arrive on campus. The associations represent members to the university, government and various bodies outside the university. Services include student advocacy, legal advice, student newspapers, computer access, discounted bus tickets, photocopying and funding for clubs and societies. The associations also organise Orientation Week (O Week), a high-tempo, week-long introduction to university life, with loads of entertainment and events including the O Ball.

UoN Services (otherwise known as ‘The U’) puts on loads of fun and free activities on campus each week, ranging from Wii wars and trivia, to pool competitions and beer bingo. There’s also free lunchtime entertainment in the Derkenne Courtyard (Tuesday and Wednesday) and Bar on the Hill (Wednesday and Thursday). The U also runs the Ucrew program, which helps students get involved with events and activities as a volunteer. It’s an ideal way for international students to make new friends and learn new skills.

The Callaghan campus’ two bars are also favourite student hangouts. The Bar on the Hill is a vast wooden building opening onto a wide verandah. It hosts movie screenings, bar trivia, poker tournaments, comedy nights, open-mic nights, local DJs, Battle of the Bands competitions, pool competitions and screens major sporting events; you’ll also catch live local and international bands here most Thursday nights (p8). Popular with study groups, the Godfrey Tanner Bar (named after a larger-than-life academic) also has pool tables and a tapas bar; have a drink, watch music videos and socialise in the outdoor area.
NUsport operates the Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre (Callaghan campus), where state-of-the-art sports facilities include six ovals (three of which are floodlit) for cricket, rugby union, rugby league, soccer, baseball and ultimate frisbee, among others. There’s also a squash centre with five courts, a tennis centre with eight fully lit courts (four hard courts and four synthetic grass), an Olympic-size pool, an 18m climbing wall, a high-tech cardio zone, a cycle zone, private training zone, weights training area and over 80 weekly group exercise classes, as well as a cafe. In the heart of Newcastle, NUsport also operates the central Forum Health & Wellness Centre (Honeysuckle precinct), with advanced training facilities.

The University of Newcastle is a member of the national network of Elite Athlete Friendly Universities (EAFU), enabling top athletes to undertake higher education while continuing to train and participate in sport at an elite level.

**SPORTING CLUBS**
- Badminton Club
- Baseball Club
- Boat Club (Rowing)
- Cricket Club
- Fencing Club
- Gymsports Club
- Hockey Clubs (Men’s and Women’s)
- Ju-jitsu Club
- Mountaineering Club
- NUDES (Newcastle University Dive and Exploration Club)
- Rugby League Club
- Rugby Union Club
- Soccer Clubs (Men’s and Women’s)
- Squash Club
- Taekwondo
- Ultimate Frisbee Club
- Volleyball Club
- Waterpolo Club

**SOCIAL CLUBS & SOCIETIES**
For those keen to broaden their horizons, the university has stacks of social clubs, societies and political groups, many catering to very specialised interests. Some of your options include the following:
- Anime Club
- Breathe Rural Health Club
- Campus Christian Movement
- Chess Club
- Design Club
- Engineering Fraternity
- Fair-Trade on Campus Society
- Gamers Society
- Islamic Society
- Medieval Society
- Mountaineering Social Club
- Newcastle Adventist Student Association
- Newcastle Campus Chinese Christian Initiative
- Newcastle Christian Students
- Physics Society
- Saudi Students Association
- United Nations Society

**CITY CONNECTIONS**

Dr Philip Matthias – director of the University of Newcastle Chamber Choir

Artistic expression and science merge with Dr Philip Matthias’ new and groundbreaking collaborative research undertaken at the ArtsHealth Centre for Research and Practice. Using brain imaging and medical technology, his research documents how human brains and bodies respond when people sing.

The University of Newcastle Chamber Choir won the 2010 World Choir Games’ ‘Mixed Choir and Contemporary Music’ section in China and won the Australian television program ‘Battle of the Choirs’.

**BEATRICE BORA**

- Age 35
- From Italy
- Studying for a PhD in Psychology (Science)

**Why did you choose Newcastle?**
My Italian mentor said I should keep in touch with some people she’d collaborated with in Australia. Then there was a vacancy for someone to collect data, and I said, ‘Great, I want to go and do research over there!’ I came for work experience then applied for a scholarship and got it.

**What did you think of Newcastle when you first arrived?**
For me it was a built-in holiday with my work experience. I looked at the temperature throughout the year and it was 10 degrees above any season in Italy. I went through the first season with no cold, no cough, no temperature, no illness and said, ‘That’s great!’

**What’s your favourite place?**
The beach. At first the beaches here scared me because the waves are so high; I took six months before getting in the ocean. Then I learnt to scuba dive in Cairns, and got my diving licence. I would like to join the university dive group – I know a place in Charlestown where they do excursions. That’s something I’ve learnt.
Further Reading & Websites

To find out more about studying at the University of Newcastle, visit its info-packed website: www.newcastle.edu.au. Specific information for international students is available at www.international.newcastle.edu.au. And to find out more about Newcastle and its surrounds, check out the following sites:

- **www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au**
  Newcastle City Council site, with practical information for residents.
- **www.visitnewcastle.com.au**
  The Newcastle Visitor Centre’s site incorporates maps, weather forecasts and details of its branch in town.
  See what the surf’s like at Newcastle’s beaches without getting wet feet.
- **www.australia.com**
  The Australian Tourist Commission’s nationwide website.
- **www.immi.gov.au/students**
  Visa information and more from the Australian government’s Department of Immigration and Citizenship.
- **www.cctourism.com.au**
  Info about the Central Coast region, between Sydney and Newcastle.
- **www.winecountry.com.au**
  Hunter Valley region’s site, with information on wineries and events.
- **www.lakemacquarie.com**
  Covers the Lake Macquarie region, south of the city.
- **www.portstephens.org.au**
  Offers an insight into Port Stephens, a harbour region to the north of Newcastle.
- **www.newcastlebuses.info**
  Comprehensive local bus- and ferry-transport site with timetables and route maps.
- **www.newcastleairport.com.au**
  Flight and access details for Newcastle airport.
- **www.pascoaches.com.au**
  Port Stephens Coaches’ bus services to Newcastle.
- **www.cityrail.info**
  Train timetables, ticket prices and route planners.
- **www.seaplanes.com.au**
  Seaplane services between Sydney and Newcastle.
- **www.greyhound.com.au**
  Australia’s national long-haul bus company.

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**DIANA ZAleta PINET**

- Age 27
- From Mexico
- Studying for a PhD in Chemistry

**What’s your research topic?**

It’s about marine drugs, the isolation of new drugs. I take organisms, in my case marine algae, and I evaporate all the water and then I get all the compounds. I isolate them and separate them...It’s really, really good. I love my research! I’m working with Mexican plants.

**What do you do when you’re not studying?**

Like every other Mexican girl I like to party! I love hanging around with my friends.

**How did you meet new friends?**

I was a Scout back home, and now I’m a leader here. When I first got here I asked: ‘So how do I meet people here?’ Someone said: ‘Oh, it’s easy, you go to the pub’. I thought, ‘oh, I don’t think they’re the kind of people I actually want to meet’. Then a guy in the office said: ‘If you were a Scout in Mexico, you can be a Scout here’. He introduced me to a physics professor here, who’s also a Scout leader. It’s helped me meet real Australian families.
Against a backdrop of sun-splashed beaches, a bustling harbourfront precinct and untouched bushland just 150km north of Sydney, Newcastle is forward-looking, creative and vibrant. The city’s refreshingly laidback lifestyle combined with the academic excellence offered by the University of Newcastle allows students to enjoy one of the most rewarding educational experiences available in the country. With this guide, Lonely Planet provides essential information about living and studying in this distinctive Australian city.