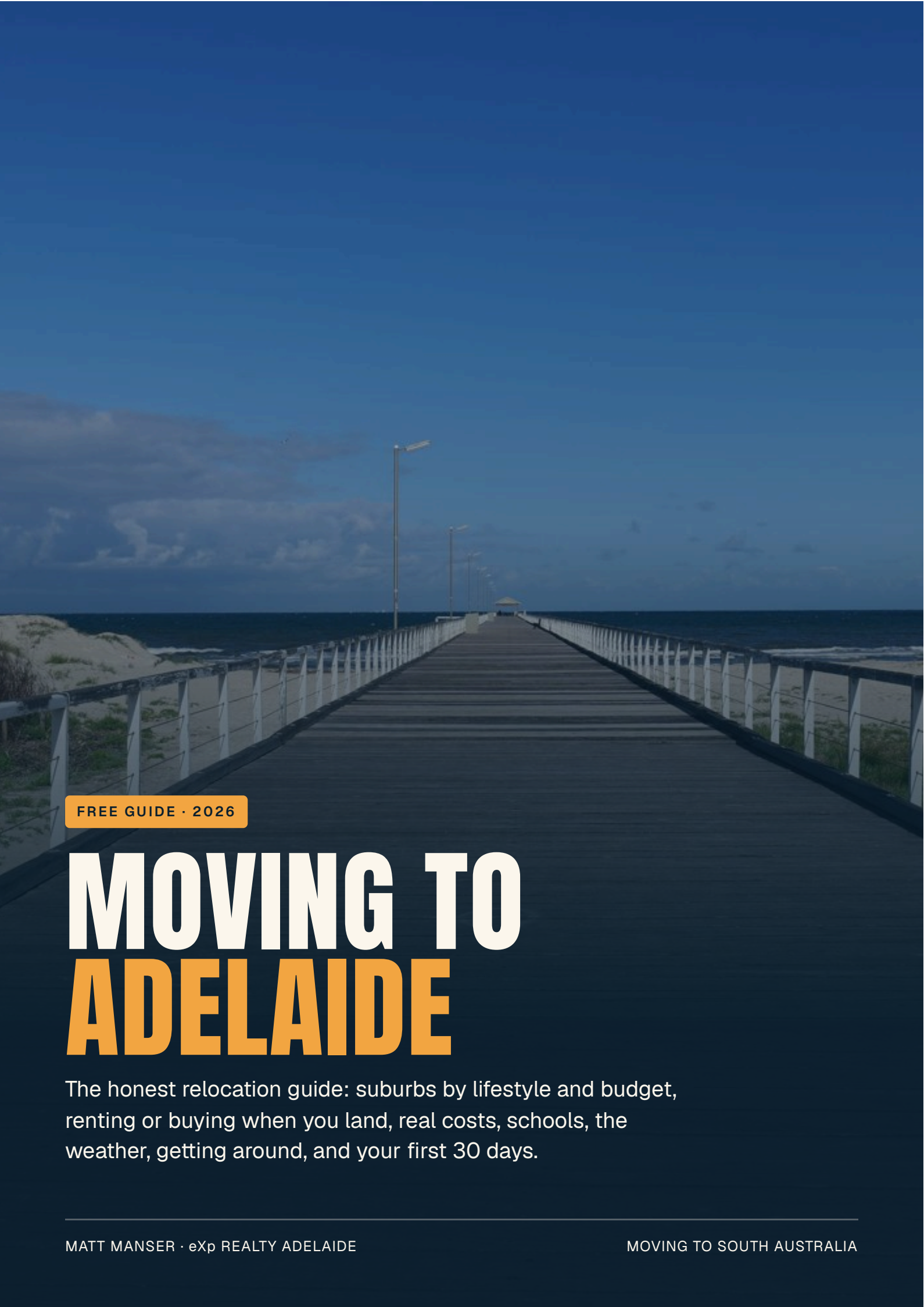

FREE GUIDE · 2026

MOVING TO ADELAIDE

The honest relocation guide: suburbs by lifestyle and budget, renting or buying when you land, real costs, schools, the weather, getting around, and your first 30 days.

WELCOME

READ THIS BEFORE YOU MOVE

G'day, I'm Matt Manser. I'm a real estate agent with eXp Realty here in Adelaide, and I sell homes in the north-east of the city. I get asked about moving here all the time, by people in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and overseas.

My job in this guide isn't to sell you on Adelaide. It's to tell you what it's really like, with real numbers, so you can decide if it's the place you want to call home. Some of what's in here is exactly why people move. Some of it is why people go back. Both are worth knowing before you pack the truck.

Every figure has a source on the last page. Prices and rents move, so treat them as a snapshot from October 2026 and check the latest before you sign anything.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01 Adelaide at a glance
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09 Getting around
10 Your moving checklist
11 Your first 30 days
12 Buying or renting? I'll help

The short version: Adelaide is cheaper than Sydney, Brisbane and Perth, but it isn't cheap any more. Rentals are hard to get. You'll want a car. It's hot in summer and properly cold in winter. And the beach, the Hills and two famous wine regions are all inside an hour.

Want suburbs picked for you?

Book a free 30-minute call. Tell me your budget, where you'll work and what matters, and I'll send you a short list of suburbs that actually fit.

mattmanserrealestate.com.au/go/msa-call

Watch the videos

The Moving to South Australia channel on YouTube covers all of this in more depth, starting with "Avoid moving to Adelaide, unless you can deal with these 10 facts".

youtube.com/@movingtosouthaustralia

01 · THE NUMBERS

ADELAIDE AT A GLANCE

$928,560
Adelaide median home value, end of September 2026
Cotality HVI

+6.5%
Adelaide values over the year (but down 1.3% in September)
Cotality HVI

$650/wk
Median house rent (Sydney $835, Perth $750, Brisbane $700)
Domain, Sep qtr 2026

0.6%
Rental vacancy: fewer than 1 in 100 rentals empty
SQM Research, Sep 2026

4.2%
SA unemployment (Australia 4.7%)
ABS Labour Force, Sep 2026

1.91m
People in all of South Australia
ABS, Dec 2025

HOW ADELAIDE COMPARES

Adelaide is now the fourth most expensive capital for a typical home. It went past Melbourne this year.

City	Median home value	vs Adelaide
Sydney	$1,198,596	+$270,036
Brisbane	$1,048,880	+$120,320
Perth	$975,022	+$46,462
Adelaide	**$928,560**	-
Canberra	$861,744	-$66,816
Melbourne	$780,550	-$148,010

Median dwelling values at 30 September 2026, Cotality Home Value Index (released 1 October 2026).

THE GOOD BITS

- Your money still goes further than in Sydney, Brisbane or Perth.
- Beach, Hills, Barossa and McLaren Vale all inside about an hour.
- The Adelaide Fringe is the biggest arts festival in the Southern Hemisphere (over a million tickets in 2026).
- Unemployment is lower than the national rate.

THE CATCHES

- Full-time pay runs about $113 a week below the national average.
- Rentals are very hard to get.
- It's a car city, and a long way from the east coast.
- More people moved out to other states in 2025 than moved in (about 1,576 more), though SA still grew from overseas arrivals.

02 · WHERE TO LIVE

SUBURBS BY LIFESTYLE

Start with how you want to live, then the budget. Figures are median HOUSE prices for the September quarter 2026 from the SA Valuer-General.

Beach life

West side of the city, a tram or short drive to the CBD. Glenelg North **$1.485m** *, Brighton **$1.4m** *, West Lakes **$1.365m**, Henley Beach **$1,962,500**. Cheaper by the sea down south: Christies Beach **$870k**, Aldinga Beach **$862k**, Seaford **$890k**, Hallett Cove **$1,012,500**.

Leafy east and city fringe

Older homes, cafes, close to the city. Prospect **$1.5m**, Magill **$1.47m**, Rostrevor **$1.415m**, Campbelltown **$1.2m**, Norwood **$2.325m**.

The Hills

Trees, cooler air and old towns like Hahndorf, about 25 minutes up the freeway. Belair **$1.295m**, Coromandel Valley **$1.17m**, Stirling **$1.46m**. Read the bushfire page before you fall in love with one.

Family north-east (my patch)

Established family suburbs, the O-Bahn busway to the city, Westfield Tea Tree Plaza. Golden Grove **$1.15m**, Greenwith **$1.003m**, Modbury Heights **$903k**, Ridgehaven **$905k**, Redwood Park **$881.5k**. Full table on page 6.

Newer estates

Newer homes and planned streets, mostly in the north. Mawson Lakes **$930k**, Lightsview **$905k**, Angle Vale **$860k**, Blakeview **$775k**.

Best value

The lowest entry prices in the metro area, mostly in the outer north and south. Andrews Farm **$676k**, Munno Para **$682k**, Davoren Park **$686k**, Paralowie **$735k**, Morphett Vale **$820k**.

Wine country: the Barossa (Tanunda, Angaston, Nuriootpa) is about an hour north and McLaren Vale under an hour south. Both are outside the metro figures, so ask me for recent sales there. There's no passenger train to the Barossa.

* fewer than 10 house sales in the quarter, so treat that median as a rough guide. A median is the middle sale, not a price for any one home.

SUBURBS BY BUDGET

Median house price, September quarter 2026, SA Valuer-General. Units and townhouses usually sit well below these, so if a suburb's out of reach for a house, ask about the units.

Budget (house)	Suburbs with a median in that range
Under $750k	Elizabeth North **$664k**, Smithfield **$671k**, Andrews Farm **$676k**, Munno Para **$682k**, Davoren Park **$686k**, Salisbury North **$717k**, Paralowie **$735k**, Craigmore **$746,250**
$750k to $900k	Blakeview **$775k**, Salisbury East **$808.5k**, Morphett Vale **$820k**, Para Hills **$825k**, Surrey Downs **$850.5k**, Ingle Farm **$855k**, Pooraka **$857.5k**, Angle Vale **$860k**, Aldinga Beach **$862k**, Christies Beach **$870k**, Redwood Park **$881.5k**, Fairview Park **$890k**, Seaford **$890k**
$900k to $1.1m	Modbury **$900k**, Valley View **$900k**, Modbury Heights **$903k**, Ridgehaven **$905k**, Lightsview **$905k**, Banksia Park **$920k**, Mawson Lakes **$930k**, St Agnes **$970k**, Modbury North **$971,250**, Hope Valley **$987.5k**, Greenwith **$1.003m**, Hallett Cove **$1,012,500**, Dernancourt **$1,047,500**, Paradise **$1.09m**, Tea Tree Gully **$1,097,500**
$1.1m to $1.5m	Wynn Vale **$1,131,500**, Golden Grove **$1.15m**, Highbury **$1,181,500**, Athelstone **$1.185m**, Campbelltown **$1.2m**, Semaphore **$1.275m** *, Belair **$1.295m**, West Lakes **$1.365m**, Brighton **$1.4m** *, Rostrevor **$1.415m**, Stirling **$1.46m**, Magill **$1.47m**, Glenelg North **$1.485m** *, Prospect **$1.5m**
$1.5m and up	Grange **$1.926m**, Henley Beach **$1,962,500**, Norwood **$2.325m**

Don't budget off old prices. Golden Grove's median was $879,500 a year earlier and $1.15m in the September quarter 2026 (+30.8%). Look at what has actually sold in the last three months in the suburbs you'd really live in.

Add stamp duty. On an established home you pay full stamp duty, tens of thousands on a typical house. RevenueSA's online calculator gives the exact figure for your price.

Coming from Sydney?

The typical Adelaide home was about $270,000 cheaper at the end of September. For many families that's a unit versus a house with a yard.

From Melbourne?

Adelaide is now the dearer city: the typical home here was about $148,000 more than Melbourne's.

Not sure where?

Send me your budget and where you'll work, and I'll send back the suburbs it buys in, with recent sales.

* fewer than 10 house sales in the quarter: a rough guide only. Source: Office of the Valuer-General SA, Metropolitan Median House Sales Q3 2026 (data.sa.gov.au, published 14 Oct 2026, CC BY).

04 · MATT'S PATCH

THE NORTH-EAST, DONE PROPERLY

Suburb	Median house	Sales	vs year ago
Highbury	$1,181,500	18	+30.6%
Golden Grove	$1,150,000	24	+30.8%
Wynn Vale	$1,131,500	16	+35.1%
Tea Tree Gully	$1,097,500	11	+19.9%
Greenwith	$1,003,000	26	+3.9%
Hope Valley	$987,500	21	+17.6%
Modbury North	$971,250	18	+7.5%
St Agnes	$970,000	11	+19.7%
Banksia Park	$920,000	10	+9.2%
Ridgehaven	$905,000	23	+16.4%
Modbury Heights	$903,000	27	+11.3%
Modbury	$900,000	16	+14.6%
Valley View	$900,000	27	+9.1%
Fairview Park	$890,000	20	+13.4%
Redwood Park	$881,500	15	+10.2%
Surrey Downs	$850,500	13	+9.6%
Salisbury East	$808,500	36	+7.8%

September quarter 2026 vs September quarter 2025, SA Valuer-General. A quarter's median can jump around on a handful of sales.

This is where I work every day, so here's the north-east properly.

WHAT IT'S LIKE

- **Families and space.** Mostly established houses on decent blocks, with schools, ovals and reserves in every suburb.
- **The O-Bahn.** A guided busway from Tea Tree Plaza interchange in Modbury, through Paradise and Klemzig, into the city.
- **Shops.** Westfield Tea Tree Plaza in Modbury is the big centre for the area.
- **Green.** The Dry Creek trail runs through the area, and Anstey Hill sits on the edge of it.
- **Councils.** Mostly City of Tea Tree Gully (2026-27 rates up 5.5%, about $2.23 a week on the median home), with Salisbury on the western side.

WHO IT SUITS

Families who want a house and a yard, a straightforward drive or O-Bahn ride to the city, and the Hills on the doorstep, without inner-east prices.

Tell me your budget and I'll tell you which of these streets it actually buys in, from recent sales, not asking prices.

05 · WHEN YOU ARRIVE

RENT FIRST OR BUY?

RENTING FIRST

Renting first is a smart way to learn the city before you commit. The rent is lower than Sydney's: the median house rent is about $650 a week against $835 there (Domain, September quarter 2026). That's around $9,620 a year.

The hard part is getting one. Adelaide's vacancy rate was 0.6% in September (SQM Research), just 948 empty rentals across the city.

- Have references, payslips and ID ready before you arrive, then inspect in person and apply on the spot.
- The bond is usually 4 weeks' rent (6 weeks only when rent is over $800 a week), held by the SA Government's Consumer and Business Services.
- Rents are advertised at one fixed price (no rent bidding), and can only go up once a year.

Short-stay while you look: Book 2 to 4 weeks of short-stay first, so you can inspect rentals in person and apply on the spot. Expedia Group (Expedia, Hotels.com, Vrbo/Stayz)

Affiliate link: I may earn a commission at no cost to you.

BUYING

There's more choice for buyers than a year ago: 10,849 homes were for sale in Adelaide in September, up 39.5% (SQM Research), and homes are taking longer to sell.

- **Get pre-approval first.** The cash rate went to 4.60% on 29 September 2026, the fourth rise this year, so check what you can borrow now.
- **The Form 1.** In a private sale the seller gives you a vendor's statement (Form 1). You get a cooling-off period of 2 clear business days after you receive it. There's no cooling-off at auction.
- **First home?** No stamp duty on a new home or vacant land, and a $15,000 grant for new homes (RevenueSA). The Government's 5% Deposit Scheme covers homes up to $900,000 in Adelaide. Buy an established home and you pay full duty.
- **Bushfire areas.** In the Hills, check the property's bushfire risk and get an insurance quote before you sign.

WHICH SUITS YOU?

Rent first if...	Buy sooner if...
You don't know the suburbs yet	Your job here is locked in
Your job or the kids' school isn't settled	You've already spent time in the area
You're not sure Adelaide is for the long haul	You have pre-approval and you'd rather not move twice

06 · THE MONEY

WHAT IT REALLY COSTS

HOUSING

- Median home value $928,560. That's $270,036 less than Sydney and $120,320 less than Brisbane, but $148,010 MORE than Melbourne (Cotality, September 2026).
- Median house rent $650 a week (Domain). SQM's weekly asking rents had Adelaide houses at $700 and units at $546 (week ending 20 Oct 2026).
- Stamp duty on top when you buy an established home.
- Council rates: Tea Tree Gully rates rose 5.5% for 2026-27, and Salisbury's rose 4.7% on average.

PAY

Full-time adult earnings in SA averaged $1,970 a week in May 2026, against $2,084 nationally (ABS). That's about $5,900 a year less. The big employers are health, education, defence and government. Search job ads in your own field here before you move. If you can keep your job and work remotely, the maths changes completely.

AMBULANCE COVER

Ambulances aren't free in SA and Medicare doesn't cover them: an emergency call-out without cover is $1,247 plus $7.15 a km. SA Ambulance cover is about $106 a year, or $211 for a family. Check if your health fund already includes it.

GETTING AROUND

- Adelaide Metro: one fare covers bus, train and tram for 2 hours. $4.75 peak and $2.70 off-peak, or a $12.90 day trip.
- Budget for a car. Most people need one, and many households need two.

POWER AND BILLS

We haven't found a reliable, current average bill to quote you, so we won't guess. Plans vary a lot. Compare them on energymadeeasy.gov.au.

Power, gas and internet connection: Compare power and gas plans on the government's free site, energymadeeasy.gov.au, before you pick one.

Moving money from overseas: Moving from overseas? Compare the exchange rate and fees your bank charges with a money-transfer service before you send a deposit.

The honest maths: a cheaper house doesn't help much if your income drops by more than you saved. Work out both before you sell up.

07 · FOR FAMILIES

SCHOOLS

HOW IT WORKS HERE

- **School zones.** Many government schools, especially high schools, have a zone. Your home address decides your local school. Check the zone on the Department for Education's website before you sign a lease or buy.
- **Year 7 is in high school** in SA, since 2022.
- **Four terms.** The school year starts in late January or early February.
- **Starting school.** Turns 5 before 1 May? They start reception in Term 1. Turns 5 between 1 May and 31 October? A mid-year start in Term 3.
- **Catholic and independent schools** don't use government zones. Many have waiting lists, so enquire early.

> **Don't sign a lease before checking the zone.** One street can be the difference between two high schools.

IN THE NORTH-EAST

Schools people often ask me about:

- Golden Grove High School
- Banksia Park International High School
- Modbury High School
- The Heights School, Modbury Heights (reception to Year 12)
- Pedare Christian College and Gleeson College, Golden Grove (non-government). Golden Grove High, Gleeson and Pedare share facilities as the One+ campus.
- Redwood Park Primary School, Lokan Street

I'm not a schools adviser, and zones and enrolment rules change. Confirm the zone for any address with the school or the Department for Education before you commit.

YOUR SCHOOL CHECKLIST

- Shortlist 2 or 3 schools, then the suburbs in their zones
- Ask each school about enrolling mid-year if you're moving mid-year
- Have last school reports and immunisation records ready

08 · THE WEATHER

HOT SUMMERS. REAL WINTERS.

46.6°C
Hottest day on record, 24 January 2019
BOM

2 to 3
Days a year at 40°C or more, on average
BOM

15°C
Average July top in the city (nights around 7.6°C)
BOM

~526mm
Rain a year. The driest state capital in Australia
BOM

SUMMER: IT'S WARM

Most summers bring only a few days over 40, but when they come you'll feel them. It's a dry heat, not Brisbane humidity. You'll want good air conditioning, and you'll learn to do your errands early. The upside: the beach is never far, and plenty of people head to Glenelg or Henley after work.

WINTER IS REAL

This surprises people who've only visited in summer. Most of the rain falls in the cooler months. The Adelaide Hills are colder again, with frost and fog on winter mornings. If you're coming from Queensland, budget for heating, not just cooling, and bring a proper jacket.

BUSHFIRE SEASON

The Hills are one of the most popular places to move to, and the trees that make them beautiful are why they carry a real bushfire risk. In December 2019 the Cudlee Creek fire burnt more than 20,000 hectares around Lobethal and destroyed more than 70 homes.

> **Thinking about the Hills?** Check the bushfire risk for the property, price the insurance before you buy, and make a bushfire plan the way the locals do (the CFS website walks you through it).

WHAT TO PACK

- Summer clothes and a hat, obviously
- A real winter coat and warm bedding
- Sunscreen all year

09 · GETTING AROUND

GETTING AROUND

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- Six train lines: Belair, Flinders, Gawler, Grange, Outer Harbor and Seaford.
- One tram line, from the city to the beach at Glenelg in about half an hour.
- The O-Bahn busway in the north-east, plus a lot of buses.
- One 2-hour fare covers all three. Get a metroCARD in your first week.
- No passenger train to the Barossa.

DRIVING

For most people, most of the time, this is a car city. The city centre was laid out on a grid by Colonel William Light in 1837 and is ringed by the Park Lands, so it's easy to find your way around.

> **Don't believe "no traffic".** TomTom's 2025 index put Adelaide's congestion level at 55.1%, the highest of any Australian city on that measure (Melbourne 52.9%, Sydney 43.7%). A 10 km drive in the evening rush averaged about 30 minutes. Time the drive to where you'll work, at the hour you'll do it.

FROM THE CITY

To	Roughly
Glenelg beach (tram)	~30 min
Hahndorf, Adelaide Hills	~25 min drive
McLaren Vale	~35 to 40 min drive
Barossa Valley	~1 hour drive

FROM EVERYWHERE ELSE

Adelaide to	By road
Melbourne	~730 km
Sydney	~1,400 km

If your family is on the east coast, you'll be flying, not popping back for the weekend. Be honest with yourself about how often you'll want to go back, and what it'll cost.

10 · PLAN THE MOVE

YOUR MOVING CHECKLIST

8 or more weeks out

- Decide: rent first, or buy?
- Shortlist 3 to 5 suburbs (pages 4 to 6)
- Check school zones for those suburbs
- Search job ads in your field in Adelaide
- If buying: get finance pre-approval
- Book a free suburb call with me

> **Removalist quotes:** Get at least two written removalist quotes, and ask what's insured and whether the price is fixed.

4 to 6 weeks out

- Book the removalist (fixed price, in writing)
- Give notice on your current lease
- Get rental references, payslips and ID together
- Book flights, or plan the drive (Melbourne ~730 km, Sydney ~1,400 km)
- Line up short-stay if you're renting here

2 weeks out

- Redirect your mail (Australia Post)
- Book power, gas and internet at the new address
- Pack winter clothes too, even in summer
- Ask for kids' school reports and records

Moving week

- Pack a first-night box: chargers, sheets, kettle, meds, documents
- Photograph meter readings on the way out
- Keep the bond paperwork and lease handy
- Take photos of the new place's condition on day one

Selling where you live now?

- eXp Realty works in NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC and WA. I can connect you with an agent in your suburb, so the sale and the move are handled together.

11 · AFTER YOU LAND

YOUR FIRST 30 DAYS

Week 1: land and settle

- Get a metroCARD and work out your commute
- Connect power, gas and internet if you haven't
- Find a GP near home, and sort ambulance cover
- Inspect rentals in person and apply on the spot

Week 2: update your address

- Medicare and the ATO (both through myGov)
- Your bank, insurer and super fund
- Enrol to vote at your new address (aec.gov.au)
- Enrol the kids (check the zone first)

HANDY OFFICIAL SITES

For	Go to
Licence, rego, government services	sa.gov.au (Service SA)
School zones and enrolment	education.sa.gov.au
Buses, trains, trams, metroCARD	adelaidemetro.com.au
Stamp duty calculator	revenuesa.sa.gov.au
Renting rules and bonds	cbs.sa.gov.au
Bushfire plans	cfs.sa.gov.au
Comparing power and gas plans	energymadeeasy.gov.au
Enrolling to vote	aec.gov.au

Weeks 3 to 4: make it official

- Swap your licence: interstate licence holders have 3 months to move to an SA licence. An interstate-registered car can be driven here for up to 90 days (sa.gov.au)
- Join a local group: sport club, school community, the council's events
- Spend a Saturday doing what you'd actually do: beach, Hills or wine
- Reset your clocks: SA is 30 minutes behind Sydney and Melbourne

Before you sign anything long-term

- Drive the commute at peak hour, both ways
- Visit the suburb at school pick-up and on a Friday night
- Look at what actually sold in the last three months
- Ask me for a list of suburbs that fit your budget

The one thing to do this week: book the free call. I'll ask about your budget, where you'll work and what you care about, then send you a short list of suburbs that fit, with recent sales. No cost, no pressure.
mattmanserrealestate.com.au/go/msa-call

12 · YOUR NEXT STEP

BUYING OR RENTING? I'LL HELP.

Moving to a new city is a lot. Tell me where you're coming from, your budget and what matters to you, and I'll do the legwork on the Adelaide end.

- **Buying:** a short list of suburbs that fit, recent sales, and help from first inspection to settlement.
- **Renting first:** which suburbs to target, and what to expect when you apply.
- **Selling interstate:** an introduction to an eXp agent in your suburb.

0437 044 433

Call or text Matt Manser · eXp Realty · RLA 300185

Book a free call

mattmanserrealestate.com.au · YouTube: Moving to South Australia

SOURCES

Median dwelling values (all capitals), Adelaide +6.5% year / -1.3% Sept: Cotality Home Value Index, 30 Sep 2026 (released 1 Oct 2026).

Suburb house medians, sales and change: Office of the Valuer-General SA, Metropolitan Median House Sales Q3 2026, data.sa.gov.au (14 Oct 2026, CC BY).

Median house rents, Sep 2026 quarter: Domain Rental Report. Weekly asking rents (week ending 20 Oct 2026): SQM Research.

Vacancy 0.6% (948 vacant) and 10,849 homes for sale (+39.5%): SQM Research, September 2026.

Unemployment SA 4.2% / Australia 4.7%: ABS Labour Force, Sep 2026. Earnings SA $1,970.20 / Australia $2,083.70 a week: ABS Average Weekly Earnings, May 2026.

Population 1,910,600 and 2025 interstate migration (-1,576): ABS National, state and territory population, Dec 2025.

Cash rate 4.60% (29 Sep 2026): Reserve Bank of Australia media release.

Stamp duty and first home buyer exemption on new homes / land (from 6 June 2024): RevenueSA. Form 1 cooling-off: Land and Business (Sale and Conveyancing) Act 1994 (SA).

Council rates 2026-27: City of Tea Tree Gully (5.5%, ~$2.23/week median) and City of Salisbury (4.7%) budgets, June 2026.

Climate (46.6°C on 24 Jan 2019; days ≥40°C; July 15.0°C / 7.6°C; ~526 mm rain): Bureau of Meteorology, Adelaide (West Terrace) 023000.

Cudlee Creek fire, Dec 2019: SA CFS and SA Government recovery reports.

Train/tram/O-Bahn network and fares ($4.75 / $2.70 / $12.90): Adelaide Metro. Congestion: TomTom Traffic Index 2025.

Adelaide Fringe 1,083,014 tickets in 2026: Adelaide Fringe impact report, July 2026.

Year 7 in high school from 2022, school zones and start ages: SA Department for Education. Redwood Park Primary: education.sa.gov.au. One+ campus: One+ Golden Grove Secondary Schools' Campus.

Bonds, rent bidding, rent increases: Consumer and Business Services SA. First Home Owner Grant: RevenueSA. 5% Deposit Scheme: Australian Government (from 1 Oct 2025).

Ambulance fees and cover (to 31 July 2027): SA Ambulance Service. Licence (3 months) and interstate rego (90 days): sa.gov.au.

General information only, not financial, legal, tax, migration or schooling advice. Figures as at October 2026; prices, rents and rules change, so check the latest before you decide. Every figure is from the source listed; nothing here is a personal story. Photos: Mark Direen, Cameron Readius, Ryan Vand, hsieh Jeffrey, Anh Thu Le, Leïa Roques, Rafid Tahmid, Peter Lewis Murimi, Syed Hadi Naqvi (Pexels licence); SCHolar44, RegionVisitor90 (CC0).