

16 January 2012

### **Australia's most family friendly city announced**

- Launceston is Australia's number 1 'family friendly' city, ahead of Canberra
- Of the 'big three', Melbourne is ranked 14<sup>th</sup>, ahead of Sydney (23<sup>rd</sup>) and Brisbane (24<sup>th</sup>)
- Queensland is the most family friendly state, with six cities in Australia's top 20 family friendly
- Tasmanian city of Burnie is Australia's healthiest city while Launceston enjoys the least crowded schools
- Queensland regional hotspot Toowoomba is the employment capital of Australia
- Adelaide is Australia's safest city, with the lowest levels of crime
- Canberra is the volunteer capital of Australia with the city's population clocking up more community work hours than any other city, while it also wins in childcare and disposable income categories.

Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane have been trumped by sleepy Launceston and Australia's capital as the nation's most family friendly cities, according to a Suncorp Bank study into the family friendliness of the nation's 30 most populous cities.

The inaugural *Suncorp Bank Family Friendly Index* shows that half of the top 10 family friendly cities are not state or territory capitals and instead include the smaller, regional cities of Albury-Wodonga, Toowoomba, and Launceston.

Australia's 30 biggest cities were ranked against ten key criteria including unemployment levels, crime rates, broadband in the home, access to health services, schools, childcare, volunteer work, house prices and disposable income.

Suncorp Bank Executive Manager Craig Fenwick said increasingly the larger, stressful, crowded urban jungles and under-serviced Eastern seaboard capitals were being upstaged by regional cities as the most family friendly in Australia.

"The results reveal for the first time that many regional cities have a better balance of job opportunities, housing affordability, income, school sizes, health services, broadband access and lower crime rates," Mr Fenwick said.

"This is the ideal mix for families when it comes to some of the fundamentals, and they're certainly showing up our international hubs like Sydney and Melbourne, which fall short on many of these measures.

“It’s often the state capitals of Australia that win international acclaim in lifestyle and liveability surveys, but our survey bucks this trend,” he said.

Despite a relatively low average income and broadband take-up, Launceston emerged as the number one city thanks to its low crime rate, less crowded schools and lower average cost of housing.

While Canberra scored highly in the income, connectivity, childcare and community engagement indicators, it was denied top spot due to higher crime rates and its high cost of housing.

Toowoomba and Albury-Wodonga pipped Adelaide and Perth at the post for a top-three place.

Mr Fenwick said although many Australians lived in or dreamt of living in Australia’s Eastern Seaboard capital cities, regional centres offered just as many, if not more, family friendly benefits.

“Queensland places extremely well with six cities in the top 20, while cities in Tasmania and the ACT topped seven of the 10 key indicators used to measure family friendliness,” Mr Fenwick said.

The New South Wales mid-north coast city of Coffs Harbour was the least family friendly city, narrowly beating the Victorian regional city of La Trobe Valley and Queensland’s Gold Coast to the wooden spoon.

### **Methodology**

To derive the rankings for the Suncorp Bank Family Friendly City Index each city was systematically ranked for each of the ten indicators on which the index was based. The indicators were then divided into two categories (Primary and Secondary) and given weightings based on the added desirability of the primary indicators. Each of the indicator’s raw scores were tallied and ranked from one to thirty, with one being the most desirable score and thirty the least. All scores were then totaled to form the Family Friendly City Index.

Data used in the Suncorp Bank Family Friendly Index was gathered from a combination of official government sources including the 2011 National Census, Australian Bureau of Statistics, State Police Crime Statistics and the Public Health Information Development Unit.

**[View Suncorp Bank’s Family Friendly Report for full breakdown \(attached\)](#)**

**Top 30 – At a glance**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>City (State/Territory)</b>	<b>Index Score</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Launceston (TAS)	130
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Canberra (ACT)	148
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Toowoomba (QLD)	156
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	Albury/Wodonga (VIC/NSW)	163
<b>Equal 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Adelaide (SA)	191
<b>Equal 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Perth (WA)	191
<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	Hobart (TAS)	200
<b>Equal 8<sup>th</sup></b>	Darwin (NT)	201
<b>Equal 8<sup>th</sup></b>	Bunbury (WA)	201
<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	Bundaberg (QLD)	209
<b>Equal 11<sup>th</sup></b>	Mackay (QLD)	212
<b>Equal 11<sup>th</sup></b>	Burnie (TAS)	212
<b>13<sup>th</sup></b>	Mandurah (WA)	232
<b>Equal 14<sup>th</sup></b>	Melbourne (VIC)	233
<b>Equal 14<sup>th</sup></b>	Wagga Wagga (NSW)	233
<b>Equal 16<sup>th</sup></b>	Bendigo (VIC)	237
<b>Equal 16<sup>th</sup></b>	Townsville (QLD)	237
<b>18<sup>th</sup></b>	Newcastle (NSW)	239
<b>19<sup>th</sup></b>	Rockhampton (QLD)	240
<b>20<sup>th</sup></b>	Sunshine Coast (QLD)	241
<b>21<sup>st</sup></b>	Wollongong (NSW)	258
<b>22<sup>nd</sup></b>	Ballarat (VIC)	260
<b>23<sup>rd</sup></b>	Sydney (NSW)	262
<b>24<sup>th</sup></b>	Brisbane (QLD)	267
<b>25<sup>th</sup></b>	Geelong (VIC)	283
<b>26<sup>th</sup></b>	Hervey Bay (QLD)	297
<b>27<sup>th</sup></b>	Cairns (QLD)	299
<b>Equal 28<sup>th</sup></b>	Gold Coast (QLD)	301
<b>Equal 28<sup>th</sup></b>	LaTrobe Valley (VIC)	301
<b>30<sup>th</sup></b>	Coffs Harbour (NSW)	334

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**Media enquiries:** Amy McDonald / 07 3835 5580 / 0403 058 462