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Australia's most family friendly city announced

- NSW regional hub Wagga Wagga is Australia's number one 'family friendly' city, ahead of Canberra.
- Only two of the 'big three' made the top ten, Sydney ranked fifth, ahead of Melbourne ninth^h.
- Victoria is the most family friendly state, with four cities in Australia's top 10.
- Darwin is the employment capital of Australia.
- Sydney has the least crowded classrooms.
- The Tasmanian city of Burnie is the cheapest city to own a home.
- NSW and Victorian twin city of Albury-Wodonga is the immunisation capital of Australia.
- Perth is the healthiest city in Australia.

Wagga Wagga has been crowned Australia's most family friendly city thanks to high employment and general safety in the city and on its roads, according to Suncorp Bank's annual Family Friendly City Index.

The report found six of the top 10 family friendly cities are not state or territory capital cities, instead include the smaller regional cities of Albury-Wodonga, Ballarat, Bendigo and Mackay.

Australia's biggest cities by population were ranked against key criteria including employment levels, schools, volunteer work, health, community and road safety and family income levels.

Suncorp Bank General Manager Russell Harrison said regional cities were offering more than just a tree change.

"Australia's regional cities are punching above their weight across a number of areas. The report shows regional hubs offer a better lifestyle but also have strong economies to support job opportunities," he said.

"When a city can offer both a work/life balance and a high paying job it becomes a very attractive place to bring up a family."

For the second year running, regional cities were the place to own a home.

Homeowners in the Tasmanian city of Burnie have among the lowest mortgage stress in Australia,” Mr Harrison said.

Wagga Wagga emerged as the number one city thanks to its high levels of safety and employment.

Canberra enjoyed the highest wages in Australia, while the Central Queensland city of Mackay beat Brisbane and Sydney in the dual income stakes.

“If you’re happy with cold mornings, Canberra is the place to earn a high income. With a larger number of public servants, it consistently outperforms in this indicator,” Mr Harrison said.

Mackay was a standout performer this year, ranking highly not just in income levels but community safety and jobs.”

Cairns beat its larger rival Brisbane with more healthy residents per capita, adding weight to the healing benefits of a warm climate and tropical lifestyle, while the Gold Coast tipped Brisbane in road safety.

Methodology

To derive the rankings for the Suncorp Bank Family Friendly City Index every city was systematically ranked on each of the nine indicators. The raw scores in each indicator are tallied and then ranked, with one being the most desirable score. All scores (or ranks) were totaled to form the Index with the lowest score being given the overall number one rank and considered the most family friendly city in Australia at the current time. The Suncorp Bank Family Friendly Index is based on measurements gathered through robust government quantitative data that is publicly available.

Top 10

Ranking	City
1	Wagga Wagga (NSW)
2	Canberra (ACT)
3	Albury-Wodonga (NSW/VIC)
4	Toowoomba (QLD)
5	Sydney (NSW)
6	Hobart (TAS)
7	Ballarat (VIC)
8	Bendigo (VIC)
9	Melbourne (VIC)

10 Mackay (QLD)

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