

INFORMATION

TEACH IN THE ALICE



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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to help you make the choice about whether moving to Alice is for you. This is a place to talk about what it's like to live in Alice Springs, what professional opportunities and experiences you will have, what the people are like and what you can expect your days to look like. The purpose of this booklet is to give you practical and useful information to help you make the decision.

This information is gathered by locals and local teachers who have made this transition before. It is an honest look at life and teaching in Alice.

Alice Springs often completely blows preconceived ideas out of the water. It's a place that's full of surprises. Teaching here gives you some really unique, challenging and exciting experiences. It's guaranteed that you will grow and learn in your time here and you might even have your mind opened to different ways of learning and living. Culture in Alice Springs is strong and it plays a big part in the lifestyle and the way that children learn here. Taking this on board and absorbing the experiences of those around you is sure to enhance your capacity to build relevant and valuable lessons. Alice Springs gives you the opportunity to use a combination of urban, rural, cultural and progressive elements in your teaching.



AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT

There are not many places in the world that you can compare to Alice Springs. It is a town that has a lot of layers and facets, the more you dig, the more you uncover, it's never ending.

While Alice Springs might be located in the middle of nowhere (or we like to say, the middle of everywhere!), it is ultimately a very urban environment. It may feel like you are moving into remote teaching, and location wise, perhaps you are. However, in terms of the methods and curriculum you'll be using and the place you'll be living, Alice is about as urban as they come.

Alice Springs is a town of around 25,000 people with around 4,300 being Indigenous. It is a town that is made up of people from all over the country and the world. Most people you talk to will have moved here from a major city, usually for work. Some will have come for a six month placement and decided to stay on because they've enjoyed the challenge of the work and the contrast of the lifestyle. There is a mixture of cultures and life experiences in Alice Springs that is a lot more concentrated than many other places. This town is absolutely full of interesting people doing interesting things.

There are all the major franchise stores for food, cars, hardware, homewares. It would be far too boring for us to list them all here, so we won't. The cost of living is slightly higher in Alice because things have a long way to come. However, wages are usually higher here too to compensate for this. You can find every range of sports team or hobby group here. There is a huge and healthy arts scene in Alice, with events happening on constant rotation. There really is no shortage of things you can do or get involved in.

The teaching curriculum in Alice Springs is the same as any other urban location across the country. Our students also participate in a whole range of innovative learning programs on top of this. We are able to incorporate the uniqueness of the land and culture of Alice Springs into the classroom experience. Your professional progression will also be identical to anywhere else in the country, one year here is equal to one year in any Australian school. The only difference may be the pace at which your career will progress. Professional roles in Alice Springs tend to take on responsibilities early and progress quickly up the career ladder.

BEFORE YOU COME

For most people, Alice Springs is a long way from home. It's a big shift to move away from family and friends, to embrace a different lifestyle and to add new experiences to your professional timeline.

It's a big decision to move anywhere new.

The rewards of moving your life and career to Alice Springs are huge. It's a place full of opportunities and adventures.

Some things to think about before you come:

Are you committed to taking your career to the next level?

Are you open to new experiences?

Do you want to involve yourself in a close knit community?

How much do you know about Indigenous Australia?

Are you willing to learn about other cultures as well as teach them?

Do you have time to invest in your students, in order to make a real difference?

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO TEACH IN THE ALICE?

The students

Students in Alice Springs are willing to teach as well as be taught. Your class will be full of children from a huge range of different cultures who will each bring a unique story to the room. They will absorb your teaching and you will absorb theirs.

Alice kids love a challenge - they'll give anything a go. These children are resilient and enthusiastic. They know that they are a long way from their city comrades, but they don't let distance be an obstacle. Students in Alice are fully aware that through technology, they have access to every resource and that through their teachers they have access to an exciting future.

The culture

Alice Springs has strong ties to the traditional culture of the area. There is a lot of value placed on strengthening the connection to culture for future generations. There are a lot of programs and events with the purpose of bringing awareness and education to the stories of the area and why we should respect it.

While living in Alice you will learn dreaming stories, what foods you can find in the bush, the meanings of different symbols in paintings, all as part of regular life as information that you will use often. You will also learn about the strength of family bonds and admirable qualities of loyalty. All of these things will influence the way you teach, talk and act around Alice.

The lifestyle

While there is always a lot going on in Alice Springs, the pace of life here is much slower than the bigger cities of Australia. People are relaxed and things move at a pace that locals call 'Alice time.' For some, it is nice to be forced to slow down and relax, for others it takes a bit of getting used to.

Living in Alice you need to have a certain level of patience when you want things done. At the same time, it can be important to keep that 'Alice timeframe' in mind and learn how to push for things when you need them to happen fast.

The dress code in Alice Springs suits its laid back lifestyle. There is very much an 'anything goes' vibe in the fashion sense, although you will rarely see anyone in a suit.

A lot of the activities in Alice Springs are based around the arts and the outdoors. There is a big creative culture in Alice Springs which often draws inspiration from the beautiful landscape and rich culture of the area. Things like mountain biking challenges, rock climbing, hiking, swimming in waterholes and camping are all popular activities. This connection to the outdoors and the land is a common theme



REAL STORIES FROM REAL TEACHERS

I think you can make a real difference in Alice Springs. Being a teacher here, an early career teacher, I'm really supported - not just in my school but in the community. I've got the opportunity to make a difference within the school. I teach the arts, my passion is to get these kids engaged, to get them excited about learning and you can do that here. I don't know of anywhere else where you've got kids who are just so excited. They're lining up at your door, they're ready to learn. They take on any opportunity, any exciting event or project that comes to town - they're ready to go.

Jess Mooney

Before I came up to Alice, I had a lot of ideas about what it was going to be like, none of those ideas were actually realistic or accurate. Alice is a small town, in the middle of the desert, in the middle of Australia. That's the reality. But Alice punches above it's weight in terms of the opportunities that are available, in terms of the cultural activities and experiences that are available in terms of the facilities that are in town as well. Alice has a symbolic position in the nation's heart. We invest in growing people - good people, who want to come and who want to stay

Paul Vanholsteyn

This makes me smile, I always say that you can consider Alice Springs to be the middle of nowhere, but in fact, it's the middle of everywhere. It's the middle of ideas it's the middle of getting to know different people from right across the world, you're just meeting so many different cultures and different children, but also people that really need you to be here for them, and I think that's what makes us come every day.

Kerrie VanAbkoude



*The learning and embracing
of the traditional culture of
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and working here so much*

PARTING THOUGHTS

Alice Springs is a unique and special place. It is surrounded by beautiful landscapes and filled with beautiful people. The learning and embracing of the traditional culture of this area is something that gives the experience of living and working here so much value. It is also what presents many of the challenges you'll face.

If you are coming into teaching in Alice as an opportunity to grow yourself both professionally and personally, you will thrive here. If you invest yourself in the growth of your students and the growth of the community, you will find many rewards.

Ultimately, the choice is yours. This booklet hopes to provide you with a thorough coverage of what you can expect from teaching and living in Alice Springs. We can't make your mind up for you, only give you all the facts and our honest opinions.

GET IN TOUCH

Check out the Teach in the Territory website at teachintheterritory.nt.gov.au or phone (08) 8951 1692 to find out more about teaching and living in Alice Springs.