



The Aussie Expat Strategy Guide *(Singapore Edition)*

How to Invest Like a Local While Living
Abroad



Introduction

Living in Singapore, it's easy to get FOMO. You see property in Brisbane or Sydney growing in value, but you hesitate because buying back home might be too difficult.

The truth? Distance isn't a problem at all. You might be entangled in some of the traps that usually confuse Australian expats.

Trap 1: The "Income Shading" Trap

Banks often treat expats like risky outsiders. They'll "shade" (reduce) your Singaporean income by **20% to 40%** to account for currency fluctuations. They then assess that reduced income using high Australian tax rates, even though you pay significantly less in Singapore.

At Home Loan Experts, we don't just "apply" to a bank; we structure the deal. We work with lenders who accept up to 80% of your net foreign income, maximising your borrowing capacity so you don't miss out on high-growth assets just because a bank's algorithm doesn't understand the Singaporean tax system.

Trap 2: The "Main Residence" Tax Cliff

The 2020 tax law changes were a "hand grenade" for expats. If you sell your former Australian home while living in Singapore, you can lose your **entire** Capital Gains Tax (CGT) exemption.

At Home Loan Experts, we provide more than just a loan; we provide a network. We connect you with expat-specialist accountants to ensure your "exit strategy" is baked into your "entry strategy," helping you decide when to sell—or hold—so you can protect your wealth.

Trap 3: The FIRB & Non-Resident Spouse Nightmare

If you are an Australian citizen, you are exempt from the Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) fees. However, if your spouse is **not** an Australian Citizen or PR, buying in joint names can trigger:

⊗ FIRB Application Fees

Often \$14,000 to \$30,000+, depending on property value.

⊗ Stamp Duty Surcharges

An extra 7-8% on your spouse's portion of the property.

At **Home Loan Experts**, we often advise buying in the Australian citizen's name alone if their income is sufficient. We perform a manual assessment of your situation to ensure you aren't paying "dead money" to the government that could have been used for your deposit.

Trap 4: The "Equity Lockdown" (Multiple Properties)

If you already have a portfolio, most banks get nervous. They struggle to see the strength in a diverse portfolio once you cross 3 or 4 properties.

Real Case Study Example

A couple living in Singapore were ready to buy their 8th investment property in Australia. Unfortunately, most banks saw their seven properties and simply deemed them "too risky."

Despite earning over \$355,000 SGD combined, lenders were "shaving" their income so aggressively it looked like they couldn't afford a \$400k loan.

They needed an interest-only loan with a 100% offset to keep their cash...

The Home Loan Experts Solution

They turned the expat specialists at Home Loan Experts. We built a strategic case for the couple to make sure their loan was approved on their terms.

- **The 80% Win:** We secured a lender that accepted 80% of their net foreign income, effectively "finding" the borrowing capacity that other banks ignored.
- **Manual Advocacy:** We bypassed the "computer says no" algorithms by securing a manual assessment. We proved the strength of their existing portfolio to the credit team directly.
- **The "Expat Holy Grail" Structure:** We negotiated a package with interest-only repayments and a 100% offset account, allowing them to minimise their AUD tax while maximising their Singaporean savings.

Despite being 6,000km away, the couple secured their 8th property with a 30-year term at an 80% LVR.

Trap 5: "Offset" vs. "Redraw" Mistakes

Standard banks often push "redraw" accounts. For an expat, this is a mistake. If you redraw funds later, you can "contaminate" the loan's tax-deductibility.

At Home Loan Experts, we prioritise 100% Offset Accounts. This allows you to park your SGD savings against your AUD debt, reducing interest immediately while keeping your tax-deductible debt clean for the future.

Your Checklist from Singapore to Settlement

Use this checklist to stay organised and take confident steps toward your lending or home-buying goals.

- Get Pre-approved:** Secure a pre-approval letter from a lender or broker specialising in expat loans before you start browsing.
- Plan for Shading:** Don't guess your borrowing power. Have a broker calculate your "shaded" foreign income first.
- Check Surcharges:** Audit your spouse's residency status for FIRB and Land Tax surcharges.
- Demand an Offset:** Ensure your loan product is an "Expat-Friendly" one with a full offset account.
- Build a "Remote Team":** Hire an Australian-based buyer's agent and solicitor. You aren't on the ground; you need "eyes" there.
- Buy "A-Grade" Locations:** Avoid high-rise apartment hotspots. Look for land-to-asset value.
- Cooling-Off Period:** Always ensure you have a window to perform a professional valuation and due diligence.
- Professional Management:** Never let a "cousin" or "friend" manage the property. Hire a professional property manager to protect your asset.
- Lodge Annually:** You must lodge an Australian tax return every year for your rental income, even if you are a tax resident in Singapore.

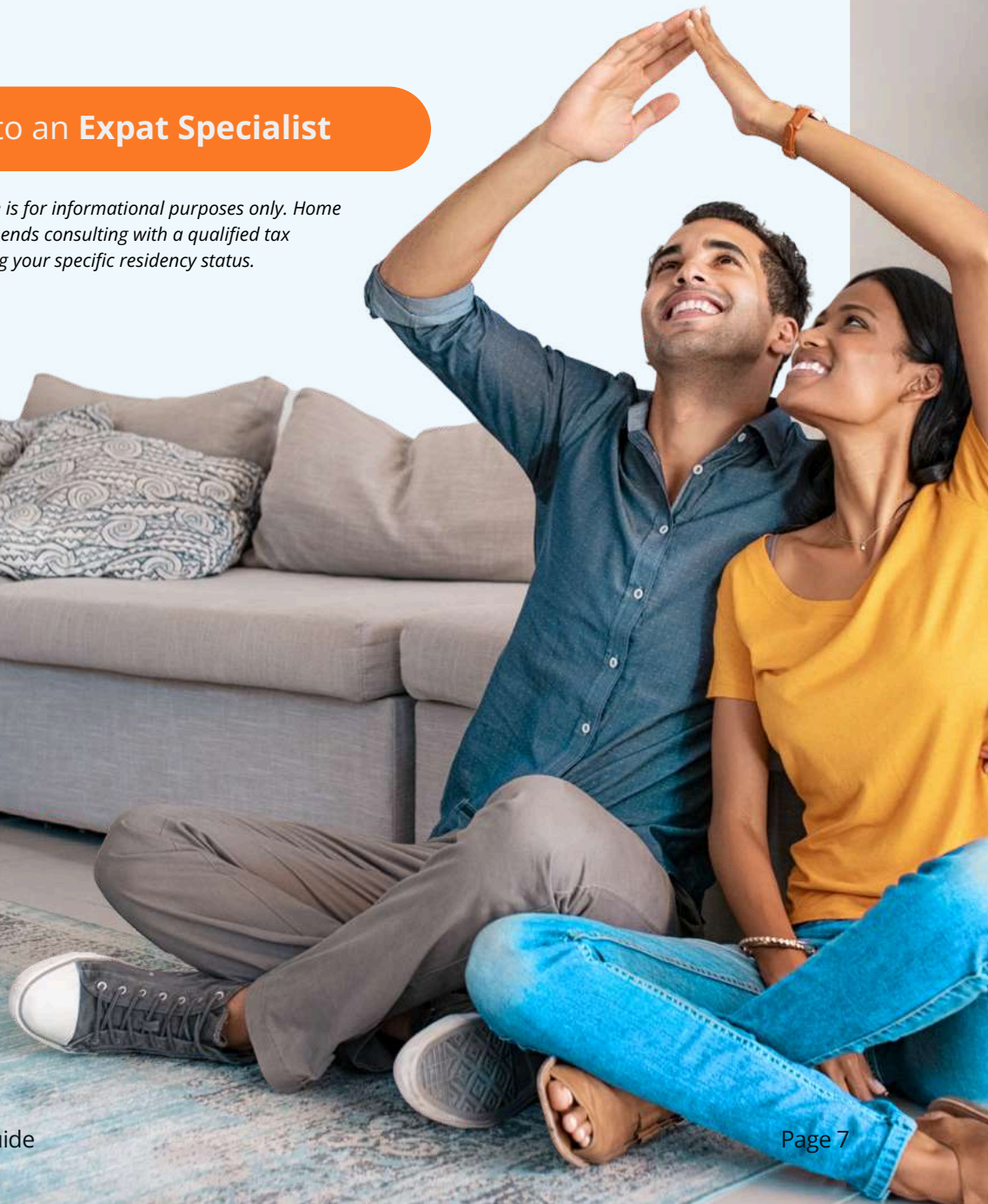
Ready to take the next step?

Talk to a lending expert who can assess your situation and map out your best options.

You didn't move to Singapore to play small. Why let an Australian bank treat you like a "risky outsider"? Whether you're looking for your first investment or your eighth, the difference between a decline and a settlement lies in the structure.

Talk to an **Expat Specialist**

Disclaimer: This guide is for informational purposes only. Home Loan Experts recommends consulting with a qualified tax professional regarding your specific residency status.





About Home Loan Experts

We help Australians navigate complex and straightforward lending scenarios — from first-home buyers to self-employed borrowers, investors, and expats. Our approach combines deep lending knowledge with clear, human guidance.

Why People Choose Us

- ✓ Experienced advisers
- ✓ Access to a wide range of lenders
- ✓ Support from application to settlement
- ✓ Clear explanations, no jargon

Award-Winning Expertise You Can Trust



Top 3 Mortgage Broker - Sydney (2019)
5-star reviews on Google, Facebook and ProductReview