



AUSTRALIAN
GUILD *of*
EDUCATION

International Student Handbook **2024**



TABLE of CONTENTS

| | |
|--|--------------|
| A welcome from the CEO | Pg 4 |
| Reasons to study in Australia | Pg 5 |
| Pre-Arrival Information | Pg 7 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Arrival Checklist• Important Documents to Bring with You• Keeping in Contact• Bringing Family | |
| Visa Requirements | Pg 10 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change of Address• Full-time study and attendance• Department of Home Affairs• Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)• Migration Agents• International Student Transfer• Overseas Student Health Cover | |
| Planning your trip to Australia | Pg 13 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arranging Travel• What to Bring | |
| Entry into Australia | Pg 17 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Immigration• Baggage Claim• Detector Dogs• Australian Customs and Quarantine• Arrivals Hall• Getting from the Airport• Checklist Upon Arrival | |
| Accommodation | Pg 20 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Websites and Descriptions• Renting | |
| Living in Melbourne | Pg 26 |
| Studying at AGE | Pg 28 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrive Early• Student Orientation• What to do first• Course Orientation• International Student Code of Conduct• Policies and Procedures• Complaints and Appeals• Student Administration Information• Safety and Security on Campus | |



Table of Contents - continued

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Living in Australia | Pg 40 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost of Living and Money Matters• Managing Finances• Working in Australia• Emergency Services• Shopping• Health and Safety• Laws and Safety in Australia | |
| Adjusting to life in Australia | Pg 65 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Culture Shock• Australian Culture• The Outdoors• The Surf Environment• Bush and Outback Safety• Storm Safety• Dangerous Animals and Plants | |
| Useful Contacts | Pg 77 |

A Welcome from the CEO & Executive Dean

A very warm welcome to the Australian Guild of Education

In 2024 AGE celebrates 55 years as a leading provider of Music and Speech Education. We would like to acknowledge at this time the many enthusiastic students, committed staff and visionary leaders that have impacted on AGE over the years. They have shaped this organisation into the one that is today. AGE is still impacting students' lives and enabling them to thrive and prosper - further testimony to the contributions made to date.

We are delighted to welcome our incoming students and support them in their educational journey. Our current Higher Education Degree Program – the Bachelor of Music - that commenced in 2002, is our key focus providing students with the best possible education in this field.

To both new -and returning students – ensuring your quality learning experience and achieving your graduate outcomes remains our top priority.

Our success is intrinsically linked to your success, and I would personally encourage you to access and take advantage of all the student and learning support services that are available to you. These support services are offered at no extra cost and are specifically developed to enhance your learning journey and help you to achieve your academic and life goals.

Without doubt we live in a fast paced and ever-changing world. In all disciplines (including music), real-world industry is breaking down barriers every day – and creating new options. At AGE, our programs are always in the process of continuous reflection and improvement so that they can be enhanced and updated on an ongoing basis. Only through this process can we properly reflect global changes. Our programs aim to remain appropriate to the industry, motivate students, excite participants and be as interactive as feasible – and at all times be relevant.

AGE was founded in 1969 out of the London College of Music. During our 55-year history, we have transitioned and adapted on many occasions to new environments and challenges and embraced opportunities to stay relevant as the world changed with and around us. You are now a part of our educational journey. I look forward to seeing you on campus and know that together we can accomplish great things during your time with us.

Emeritus Professor Greg Whateley

Chief Executive Officer and Executive Dean
Australian Guild of Education Pty Ltd



Reasons to study in Australia

Nine key facts about studying in Australia according to the Australian Government [Study Australia](#) website:

(1) DISCOVER HOW TO BE AN INNOVATIVE, AGILE THINKER

Australian universities, colleges and schools are committed to equipping you with practical skills and knowledge to help you succeed in your chosen industry. As global demand booms for entrepreneurial and innovative thinkers, Australian education providers have re-engineered their approaches to teaching and learning to inspire thought-leading creativity among students in every discipline.



Australian universities, colleges and schools will teach you the practical skills and theoretical knowledge to help you succeed in a fast-changing world and remain agile in uncertain times.

(2) STUDY AT GLOBALLY RANKED INSTITUTIONS

Australia is setting international standards for excellence in education.

The Australian education sector comprises world-leading education institutions, premium training facilities, and outstanding lecturers and student support services.

If you're looking for unbiased proof that Australian universities truly are world-class, look at independent global rankings such as [Times Higher Education](#), [QS](#) and [Shanghai Rankings](#). These organisations consistently rank Australian institutions in the world's top 100 universities year after year.

(3) GAIN WORK EXPERIENCE WHILE YOU STUDY

There are many valuable skills and experiences to gain if you choose to study in Australia. [What makes Australia a great place to work as an international student?](#) (PDF 1.8MB)

Australian institutions provide an education designed to help you succeed in the global workforce. An Australian qualification will make you very attractive to potential employers in Australia, at home and around the world.

Many Australian degrees and vocational courses include work experience programs and internships so you can gain hands-on industry experience and grow your professional network while you study. Once you complete your degree, you may also be eligible to stay and work in Australia.

While studying, you can work up to 20 hours per week during the semester and full-time during the semester break. This can be a great way to find study-related work or simply pay for your lifestyle in Australia.

(4) ACCESS EXTENSIVE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Australian institutions offer a huge range of student support services to help you settle into your new life in Australia. Education providers must comply with strict quality control and government accreditation measures so you can be assured you will receive only the best service. In several cities and towns, there are dedicated international student support centres, each offering practical advice and support on issues like legal rights, job skills and opportunities to meet and socialise with other local and international students.

Australia's Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS Act) framework enforces by law the best practice protection for the rights of international students studying in Australia.



(5) LIVE AND STUDY IN SAFETY

Australian cities have some of the lowest crime rates in the world, and our streets and public spaces are open and safe. There are many options for accommodation: you can live in purpose-built student villages, homestays, private rentals, share-houses or boarding school accommodation.

(6) FEEL WELCOME IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Australia is a friendly and welcoming country. Our nation values individual freedoms, and the rights of citizens and visitors are protected under a transparent legal system.

We are also a multicultural society with respect for others

no matter who they are or where they come from. Did you know almost 30% of Australians are born overseas? This has made our country rich with nationalities and cultures from all over the world.

When you study in Australia, you will join more than half a million international students from 192 countries who have been welcomed into Australian life.

(7) MAKE THE MOST OF AUSTRALIA'S GREAT OUTDOORS

With a unique mix of thriving cities and regional centres, vast open spaces and spectacular landscapes, it's no wonder Australia attracts people from all over the world.

The first thing you will notice when you land in Australia is our fresh air and blue skies. We have a long history of protecting the beauty and sustainability of our environment. The result? Clean and sustainable cities and regional centres with plenty of green spaces and relatively low air pollution.

Our diverse natural environment offers a range of experiences – you can relax on our golden beaches, venture into our national parks to see our unique plants and animals and explore the untamed outback.

Australian institutions also place great importance on teaching students the value of sustainability and how to apply it in all areas of industry.

(8) ENJOY A HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING

Australian cities are consistently ranked as some of the most liveable in the world. Our quality of education, healthcare, transport, infrastructure and government services are rated well above international averages.

Australia is a technologically advanced country with a strong, globally competitive economy. You will enjoy all the benefits of high-quality services, transportation and infrastructure in our towns and cities.

(9) EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Our educational institutions make students work-ready and understand what it takes to succeed in the global workforce. An Australian qualification will make you a very attractive potential employee to employers in Australia, at home and around the world.

See more from Study Australia:

- ▶ [Student and Alumni Stories](#)
- ▶ [Cost of Living Calculator](#)
- ▶ [Latest Travel and Visa Advice](#)



Pre-Arrival Information

Pre-Arrival Checklist

You will need to organise the following before arriving in Australia:

- ▶ Apply for passport
- ▶ Purchase an approved Overseas Student Health Cover policy
- ▶ Arrange student visa
- ▶ Make contact with AGE
- ▶ Arrange for immunisations and medications from your doctor
- ▶ Apply for a credit card and/or arrange sufficient funds
- ▶ Confirm overseas access to your funds with your bank
- ▶ Make travel arrangements
- ▶ Arrange travel insurance
- ▶ Advise AGE of travel details
- ▶ Arrange accommodation
- ▶ Arrange transport from airport to accommodation
- ▶ Pack bags being sure to include the following:
 - Name and contact details of an institution representative
 - Enough currency for taxis, buses, phone calls and food in the event of an emergency.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS TO BRING WITH YOU

- ▶ THIS HANDBOOK!
- ▶ Passport with student visa
- ▶ Letter of offer
- ▶ Confirmation of enrolment (CoE)
- ▶ Certified copies of qualifications & certificates
- ▶ Receipts of payment
- ▶ Travel insurance policy
- ▶ ID cards, drivers licence, birth certificate (or copy)

If you are travelling with your family, you will need to include their documents as well. Keep all documents in your carry-on luggage. Make sure you leave any originals or copies of these documents safely with family in your home country in case of loss.

Keeping in Contact

Before you leave home, you should provide your family and friends, and your education provider in Australia, with details of your flights to Australia and where you will be staying when you arrive. (Do not change these details without informing



them.) Once you have arrived in Australia, you should then let your family and friends know that you have arrived safely. It is important to ALWAYS let someone know where you are and how to contact you by phone or by post.

It is also important that you make sure that your contact details always remain up to date with the college, this is also a requirement of your visa.

Bringing Family

Most student visas allow you to bring your family members to Australia as your dependents (check your individual circumstances with the Department of Home Affairs. Family members include your spouse, and you and your spouse's dependent children. Before bringing your spouse or children to Australia, you will have to prove that you can support them financially. The cost of supporting a family in Australia is very high. You may have to consider and discuss many issues with your family.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Rather than bringing your family together with you to Australia, some students may find it useful to arrive first, settle into studies, find appropriate accommodation, adjust to living in Australia and then arrange for their family to join them.

Before making a decision to bring your family to Australia, it is important to consider the following issues:

- ▶ The cost of airfares for your family to and from Australia
- ▶ Possible higher rent for a larger home
- ▶ Limited employment opportunities for your spouse
- ▶ Extra costs for food, clothing and other necessities
- ▶ The effect on you and your studies if your family is not happy in Australia
- ▶ Whether your children will adjust to school in Australia
- ▶ Whether to come alone to Australia first and arrange things for your family, or all arrive together
- ▶ Waiting lists for childcare centres.

SCHOOLS AND CHILDCARE

Finding suitable childcare in Australia requires patience and planning. Waiting lists for places in most childcare centres are long.

Many schools offer before and after school care programs (usually 7:30am-8:45am and 3:30pm- 6:00pm). Children who need these programs must be registered with the school.

SCHOOL-AGED DEPENDENTS

If you are bringing school-aged children with you when you study in Australia, you will need to arrange for them to attend school. The requirements for enrolling students and school fees vary across Australian states and territories, and schools.

For more information about enrolling children in Victorian schools, visit the [Study Victoria](#) website. Note that school fees apply for most dependents of temporary residents in Victoria; the [Study Victoria](#) website will help guide you through this process.

If you would like to bring your children to Australia with you, you must be aware of the following schooling issues:

- (1) It is an immigration policy that school-age dependents of international students undertake formal schooling while they are in Australia.
- (2) Children who have their fifth birthday before 1st April of that calendar year are eligible to start school
- (3) You will need to provisionally enrol your child in a school before you leave your home country and you will normally have to pay the school fees one semester in advance. The school will issue an electronic Confirmation of Enrolment Form (eCoE) stating the program and its duration, so that you can obtain the appropriate visa for your child.
- (4) The Diplomatic Mission in your country can tell you which State schools are registered to take international students. Fees are payable by international students at all State schools unless you:
 - ▶ are in receipt of sponsorship or scholarships from the Australian Government (e.g. the Australian Development Scholarship, IPRS).
 - ▶ hold a higher institution or approved non-government scholarship. These scholarships must be approved by the State government for the dependants to be exempt from school fees.
- (5) You will be responsible for school fees and other costs including school uniforms, books, excursions and stationery.
- (6) When choosing the most appropriate school for your child, it is best to ask questions about the school's curriculum, size, extra-curricular activities and the size of individual classes.
- (7) You should also take into consideration the distance from the school to your education institution, the suburb in which you intend to live and the method of transport you plan to use.





Visa Requirements

If you are granted a visa, you must abide by its conditions. Failure to comply with these conditions could result in the cancellation of your visa. These conditions include (but are not limited to):

- ▶ Complete the course within the duration specified in the CoE
- ▶ Maintain satisfactory academic progress
- ▶ Maintain approved Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) while in Australia
- ▶ Remain with the principal education provider for 6 calendar months, unless issued a letter of release from the provider to attend another institution
- ▶ Notify your training provider of your Australian address and any subsequent changes of address within 7 days.

The Department of Home Affairs publishes a full list of mandatory and discretionary student visa requirements on its website. Follow the [Student Visa Eligibility](#) link for details.

Change of address

Upon arriving in Australia, you are required to advise AGE of your residential address and telephone number and any subsequent changes to your residential address. This is extremely important to ensure you receive correspondence whilst studying. AGE may also send warning notices to you which are aimed at helping prevent breaches of your visa conditions. It is your responsibility and in your own interests to ensure that you always update your address details at AGE to ensure you receive important information about your course, fees and possible breaches of your student visa. AGE will remind you to update any change to contact details every 6 months.

Full-time study and attendance

Australian law requires international students to study at a full-time study load. A full-time study load at AGE is a minimum of 8 units per year.

AGE students are required to attend at least 80% of their classes in order to pass the unit (unless other arrangements are made for special circumstances). For students who have unsatisfactory academic progress AGE is required to review your involvement, counsel you, implement an intervention strategy and, if unsatisfactory progress persists, notify the Department of Education. For more information, see AGE's Course Progression Policy and Procedure.

Department of Home Affairs

According to the Department of Home Affairs, you must provide evidence that satisfies the assessment factors applicable to you to be granted a student visa. Assessment factors include your **financial ability**, **English proficiency**, **likely compliance with the conditions of your visa** and **any other matters considered relevant to assessing your application**. Additional information on student visa issues is available on the [Department of Home Affairs](#) website and the [Study Australia](#) website.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

The [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#) website has a comprehensive list of Australian embassies, high commissions, consulates and representative offices in Australia and around the world.



Migration Agents

A migration agent can assist you in submitting your visa application and communicate with the Department of Home Affairs on your behalf, but please note that you do not need to use a migration agent to lodge any kind of visa application.

Education Agents

Education agents promote various Australian education programs and institutions internationally and are a good way for students to apply to study in Australia. Agents are experienced in making international student applications and applying for visas. Most speak both English and the local language so this makes the application process a lot simpler and generally hassle free for students and parents. Most do not charge for their service as they collect a commission from the institution you choose to attend. However, some agents do charge small amounts or offer additional services for which they charge. You can check with your Australian education provider for contact details of agents they recommend. Please note that although able to assist in completing education and visa applications, Education agents are NOT licensed to provide migration advice.

International student transfer

Under the revised *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*, registered providers are only able to enrol transferring students in the **first six months** from the commencement of the student's principal course of study in limited circumstances. For further information regarding AGE's Policy and Procedure on **International Student Transfer**, and for an application form both available on the website.

Please note that transferring to another education provider may affect your visa.

If your new course is at a lower level, you may need to apply for a new student visa.

For further information, please refer to the Department of Home Affairs website at homeaffairs.gov.au or call 131 881 to discuss your circumstances.

Under the ESOS Framework, AGE cannot enroll students seeking to transfer from another institute before that student has completed six months of their principal course of study, except in some circumstances. If you want to transfer from AGE before completing six months of your **principal course**, you need to ask AGE for a letter of release.

The six months are calculated as six calendar months from the first day of your principal course. Your principal course is usually the final course of study you will undertake. For example, if you are studying ELICOS followed by a degree program, the degree program is your principal course. If you are considering requesting a transfer before completing six months of your principal course of study, please contact AGE administration for a copy of the transfer procedure and the application form.

Letters confirming release will be issued to eligible students free of charge.

Students do not need a letter of release if:

- ▶ they have completed more than 6 months of your principal course
- ▶ they are a government-sponsored student, and their sponsor supports a transfer
- ▶ their current education provider or course has ceased to be registered or a sanction has been imposed that prevents your provider from continuing to deliver your principal course.

Overseas student health cover

Overseas student health cover (OSHC) is insurance that provides cover on the costs for medical and hospital care which international students may need while in Australia. OSHC will also pay for most prescription drugs and some vaccinations as well as emergency ambulance transport.

If you are an international student studying in Australia, you must purchase an approved OSHC policy from a registered health benefits organisation, commonly referred to as a health fund before applying for your visa. You will need to buy OSHC before you come to Australia, to cover you from when you arrive. You will also need to maintain OSHC throughout your stay in Australia. AGE can assist you in obtaining OSHC through our preferred provider, Bupa, or students can purchase their own through another insurance company.

You can find out more about purchasing OSHC at privatehealth.gov.au.





Planning your trip to Australia

Arranging Travel

You will need to make your own travel arrangements to Australia. Please try to arrive at least 1-2 weeks before the start of Student Orientation to allow enough time for settling-in, adjusting to the climate and overcoming jet-lag.

You will fly into **Melbourne International Airport** which is located in the suburb of Tullamarine and is approximately 20km northeast from Melbourne's central business district (CBD). Travel time between Melbourne Airport and the CBD can take between 20-45 minutes, depending on traffic situations.

For passenger information, please visit Melbourne Airport's website at melbourneairport.com.au for details.

What to bring

Students are often surprised by how strict Australian Customs Services and Quarantine can be. If you're in doubt about whether your goods are prohibited or not, declare it anyway on the Incoming Passenger Card which you will receive on the plane. Students have received on the spot fines for not declaring items. Visit [Australian Customs and Quarantine Control](#) for details on what can be brought in and what can't be mailed to Australia.

BAGGAGE

Baggage allowances flying into Australia will vary according to your carrier, flight class and country of origin. Please check with your carrier prior to departure. Economy passengers are generally permitted 1 x checked luggage (35kg) and 1 x carry-on (7kg) for international flights, but only 20kg of checked luggage on domestic flights within Australia. This will significantly limit the amount of things you can bring, especially if you will fly within Australia to get to your final destination. Therefore, it is essential to think the packing process through very carefully. You will be able to purchase most things upon arrival in Australia, but the price may be higher than in your own country.

SEASONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Summer in Australia is from December to February, autumn from March to May, winter from June to August, and spring from September to November. For most of the country the hottest months are January and February.

If you arrive in June or July, the coldest months of the year, you may need to bring or buy winter clothing and blankets. You may also need to purchase a heating appliance once you arrive.

CLOTHING

On most campuses, students usually dress informally. Jeans or slacks with t-shirts or blouses, sneakers or "running shoes" are almost standard dress. Shorts are often worn during the summer months and sandals are the most common footwear. It is acceptable for both men and women to wear shorts and sleeveless t-shirts. This is common during the hotter months.

A sports coat or suit and tie for men and appropriate dress for women is necessary for some functions such as formal dinners, a graduation ceremony, student dances or balls. For festive occasions, you may want to bring traditional dress and accessories.

Most primary and secondary school students will be required to wear a school uniform to classes and other school activities. You should check with your education provider what is included in the uniform package.

OTHER USEFUL ITEMS

Other items you might like to include (most can be purchased in Australia):

- ▶ alarm clock
- ▶ bath towels, bed sheets, pillow cases
- ▶ dictionary (bilingual)
- ▶ small sewing kit
- ▶ music CDs or iPod
- ▶ sporting equipment
- ▶ toiletries
- ▶ umbrella
- ▶ scientific or graphics calculator
- ▶ camera
- ▶ micro recorder for lectures
- ▶ spare spectacles or contact lenses; optical prescription
- ▶ swimming costume
- ▶ photos of family and friends; gifts from home





POWER PLUGS

The standard voltage for electrical items in Australia is 240V. Electric plugs have three flat pins one of which is an earth pin. You may need to buy an adaptor or have the plugs changed when you arrive.



Note: In the picture, the red dot indicates that the switch is on and power is flowing through that socket.

BRINGING YOUR COMPUTER

Bringing a PC or laptop into Australia may be a little more complicated.

Items owned and used for more than 12 months prior to arrival are allowed in tax-free. Proof of the date of purchase and purchase price may be required. Computers which are less than 12 months old and over AU\$400 may attract Goods and Services tax (GST) at a rate of 10%. Consideration is given as to whether or not you intend to export the computer at the conclusion of your studies.

To satisfy the Customs Officer that you will be taking the computer out of Australia you should bring along a statutory declaration (a written declaration witnessed by the certifying authority in your country) stating that the computer is for use during your studies in Australia, and that you intend to take it back with you when you complete your studies. You may be required to give an undertaking under Section 162 to this effect and provide a cash security to Australia Customs upon arrival.

MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS

If you are considering bringing a mobile phone, laptop, or any communication devices we suggest that you visit the [Australian Communications and Media Authority](#) before making any purchases. Some students have brought in their own laptops with internal modems only to discover that they were unable to use their modem in Australia. Any external or built-in modems must be Austel Approved in order to function in Australia.

ON YOUR FLIGHT

Wear comfortable, layered clothing so that you are able to make adjustments according to the local weather. Remember – if you are flying from a northern hemisphere winter into the Australian summer it will be very HOT so

wear light weight clothing underneath and have a pair of sandals or lighter shoes in your hand luggage if you need cooler footwear. Alternatively extra clothing may be required on-hand if flying into the Australian winter season.

Before landing in Australia passengers are given an Incoming Passenger Card to fill in. This is a legal document. You must tick YES if you are carrying any food, plant material (including wooden souvenirs) or animal products. This includes any food given to you during your flight. If you have items you don't wish to declare, you can dispose of them in quarantine bins in the airport terminal. Don't be afraid to ask airline staff if you have any questions.

If you are carrying more than AU\$10,000 in cash, you must also declare this on your Incoming Passenger Card. It is strongly recommended however, that you do not carry large sums of cash but arrange for an electronic transfer of funds into your Australian bank account once it has been opened.





Entry into Australia

Australian Immigration

When you first arrive in Australia you will be required to make your way through Australian Immigration (follow the signs for Arriving Passengers as you leave the plane). An Immigration Officer will ask to see your completed Incoming Passenger Card (given to you on the plane) along with your passport and student visa evidence. The Immigration Officer will check your documents and may ask you a few questions about your plans for your stay in Australia.

Baggage Claim

Once you have passed through the immigration checks you will move to baggage claim (follow the signs) and collect your luggage. Check that nothing is missing or damaged. If something is missing or damaged go to the Baggage Counter and advise them of your problem. Staff at the Baggage Counter will help you to find your belongings or lodge a claim for damage.

Detector Dogs

You may see a Quarantine Detector Dog at the baggage carousel or while waiting in line to pass through immigration, screening luggage for food, plant material or animal products. If you see a detector dog working close to you, please place your bags on the floor for inspection. These dogs are not dangerous to humans and are trained to detect odours. Sometimes a dog will sit next to your bag if it sniffs a target odour. Sometimes dogs will detect odours left from food you have had in the bag previously. A quarantine officer may ask about the contents of your bag and check you are not carrying items that present a quarantine risk to Australia.

Australian Customs and Quarantine

Once you have your luggage you will go through Customs. Be careful about what you bring into Australia. Some items you might bring from overseas can carry pests and diseases that Australia doesn't have. You must declare ALL food, meat, fruit, plants, seeds, wooden souvenirs, animal or plant materials or their derivatives.

Australia has strict quarantine laws and tough on-the-spot fines. Every piece of luggage is now screened or x-rayed by quarantine officers, detector dog teams and x-ray machines. If you fail to declare or dispose of any quarantine items, or make a false declaration, you will get caught. In addition to on-the-spot fines, you could be prosecuted and fined more than AU\$60,000 and risk 10 years in prison. All international mail is also screened.

Some products may require treatment to make them safe. Items that are restricted because of the risk of pests and disease will be seized and destroyed by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS).

For more detailed information visit [Australian Customs and Quarantine Control](#).

Arrivals Hall

You will be able to leave the restricted area and enter the Arrivals Hall once you have cleared Customs. Here you will find a number of retail and food outlets along with public telephones, an information booth and money exchange facilities. If you arrive on a weekend, you may like to exchange money here as most banks are not open on Saturdays and Sundays.



Getting from the airport

SkyBus

SkyBus runs express services between Melbourne Airport and Melbourne CBD (Southern Cross Station), operating between 4am and 1am 7 days a week, with the adult fare being \$19.95 one way or \$32 return. SkyBus stops at Terminal 1, Terminal 3 and Terminal 4 – check the SkyBus [website](#) for more information on this service, including timetables and fares.

Melbourne City Express timetable:

- ▶ 15 min service frequency – 04:00 to 08:45
- ▶ 10 min service frequency – 08:45 to 17:45
- ▶ 15 min service frequency – 17:45 to 01:00

SkyBus also provides services to St Kilda and Frankston. There is a SkyBus booth to assist with tickets and related services on the ground level of T2.

Taxis

A taxi to Melbourne City takes approximately 35 minutes and costs around \$55–65, although times and fares can vary. Taxis can be caught on the ground floor outside T1, and between T2 and T3.

See the [Taxi and Rideshare Pickup Map](#) for locations.

Rideshare

The following Rideshare companies operate at Melbourne Airport: uberX, UberBLACK, Ola, Didi, GoCatch and Shebah.

A rideshare access fee of \$4.54 (inc GST) applies per trip. Rideshare passengers can be dropped off at any of the public drop off areas. These are located anywhere along Departure Drive and the Terminal 4 Transport Hub drop off zone on Level 1.

Each rideshare operator as the provider of the service is responsible for determining the price it charges its riders for trips from Melbourne Airport to the CBD. You can get fare estimates on the respective rideshare operators app.

See the [Taxi and Rideshare Pickup Map](#) for locations.

Public Buses

The following public buses arrive and depart from Melbourne Airport near the At Terminal T4 Car Park. To travel, you will need a [myki card](#).

- ▶ [Route 478 Airport West SC \(via Melrose Drive\)](#)
- ▶ [Route 479 Airport West SC \(Sunbury Station\)](#)
- ▶ [Route 482 Airport West \(via South Centre Road\)](#)
- ▶ [Route 901 Frankston](#)

See [Terminal 4 Ground Floor Map](#) for locations.

Pick Up

If someone is picking you up from the airport and would like to meet you in the terminal, they can park at the [At Terminal T1 T2 T3 Car Park](#). Alternatively, they can park in the wait zone on the corner of Mercer Drive and Melrose Drive for 20 minutes for free and drive up to the pickup point outside T2 once ready to meet you.



CAR RENTAL

Melbourne Airport offers six car rentals companies including Avis, Budget, Europcar, Enterprise (formally Redspot), Hertz and Sixt, that are all on site and located on the ground floor of the [At Terminal T1 T2 T3 Car Park](#).

For booking information, go to melbourneairport.com.au/Passengers/Parking/Ground-transport-options/Car-rental.

CHAUFFEUR

Chauffeur/Hire cars can be pre-arranged to meet you at any of our terminals. Drivers will meet at the Chauffeur/ Hire cars meeting points inside the airport. The fee is agreed to in advance as there is no meter in the vehicle. Chauffeur/Hire cars must be pre-arranged as there are no service desks at the airport.

See [Chauffeur/Hire Car Pick-up Map](#) for locations.

Checklist Upon Arrival

Once you've arrived, you should do the following:

- ▶ Call home!
- ▶ Settle into accommodation
- ▶ Contact institution
- ▶ Purchase household items and food
- ▶ Enrol children in school (if applicable)
- ▶ Attend student orientation
- ▶ Get student ID card
- ▶ Advise health insurance company of address & get card
- ▶ Open a bank account
- ▶ Get textbooks
- ▶ Start classes
- ▶ Apply for tax file number if seeking work
- ▶ Get involved in student life and associations (eg. music, sports or cultural clubs)



Accommodation

The following types of accommodation are available for International students:

- ▶ Hostels and Guesthouses – \$90 to \$150 per week
- ▶ Shared Rental – \$95 to \$215 per week
- ▶ Homestay – \$235 to \$325 per week
- ▶ Rental – \$185 to \$440 per week

This accommodation can be booked prior to arrival. Usually, two weeks’ advance notice is required before you depart for Australia. Further details can be obtained from Student Services and Administration (support@quildmusic.edu.au).

The following is a list of places where you can go to find advertisements for accommodation:

- ▶ Newspaper classifieds
- ▶ Real Estate Agent windows and websites
- ▶ Local shopping centre notice boards
- ▶ Online student accommodation services.

Some useful websites for housing are:

| Websites & | Description |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| casita | Casita primarily offers off-campus accommodation that has been designed and built specifically for university students across the UK, Australia, Europe, USA and Canada. This means you will be living and socialising with other university students, making new friends and enjoying the facilities on offer that often include common meeting areas, study rooms, games rooms, gyms, bike storage, social activities, 24-hour security, a reception desk, and on-site laundry facilities. The price quoted includes all costs such as electricity, gas, water and wifi. |
| Flatmates.com.au | Australia’s biggest shared accommodation website – a service to connect people looking to rent rooms with flat mates. |
| Iglu | Iglu offers modern student accommodation in Melbourne, purpose-built with student requirements in mind. All Iglu properties offer a range of flexible living options with one easy bill each week to cover all rent, utilities, unlimited internet and regular Iglu events. |
| Realestate.com.au | Rental properties site for apartments and houses. |
| Rooms International | Established over 20 years ago, Rooms International is a trusted and experienced Australian owned student accommodation provider in Melbourne that makes renting easy for students new to Melbourne or living for the first time away from home. |
| Scape | Scape launched in Australia in 2013 and has become the biggest PBSA (purpose-built student accommodation) owner and operator. Scape offers a new way for students and working professionals to live centrally, affordably and easily. |
| The Switch | The Switch offers lifestyle-led student living located at Melbourne Victoria Market, a prime location within walking distance to Melbourne’s universities, coffee hangouts, laneways and markets. |
| UniLodge | UniLodge provides purpose built student accommodation either on campus or in close proximity to major educational institutions, including universities, colleges and TAFE, across Australia and New Zealand. |

Renting

SECURITY DEPOSITS/BOND

The owner or agent of an owner who has the right to rent you a property is called the landlord. A landlord will ask you for money before you move into an apartment. This is called a security deposit or bond and may amount to more than AU\$1,000 dollars. The bond is usually set at four weeks' rent. A bond or "security deposit" is an amount of money that is supposed to guarantee that the tenant will care for the property. If the tenant does not care for the property or clean it before leaving, the landlord has a legal right to keep the security deposit. Otherwise, the landlord must return the security deposit within a month after the tenant leaves.

SIGNING A LEASE

In most cases, the landlord will require the tenant to sign a lease. A lease is a written agreement between a tenant and a landlord that describes the responsibilities of each party. This is a binding legal document that commits the student to a specific period of residency in the unit.

INSPECTION OF PROPERTY

Most landlords will inspect the property with you on commencement of your tenancy. This is done with a list of furniture and fittings in each room of the property so that the two of you can agree on the condition of the property at the commencement of the tenancy. You should note on this document anything you notice during the inspection that is not already listed and keep a copy that has been signed by both of you. Once you are the tenant, the condition of these things will be your responsibility.

This will be done again at the end of your tenancy and the final condition of the property may determine the return of your full security deposit.

If this inspection is not suggested, you might suggest it yourself as a means of ensuring fair treatment for all parties involved.

UTILITIES

Unless someone is already living in the dwelling, the new tenant must start utility services, such as telephone, electricity, and gas. This requires contacting each individual company and arranging for the services to be connected from a specified date. The companies providing these utilities also require a small security deposit. In some cities instead of making numerous calls to different companies, there may be a utility provider company. If someone has vacated the property before you, contacting these utility companies for connection of services will ensure all previous accounts have been finalised and paid for by the previous tenant.

RESTRICTIONS

The lease may contain restrictions, such as not permitting animals or children in the dwelling. Ask the landlord about his/her particular requirements. Make sure that you know and understand these restrictions before signing the lease. If you do not obey the restrictions on the lease, the landlord can ask you to leave.





INSPECTING A POTENTIAL PROPERTY

It's a good idea to take notes of each property you inspect. As well as the address, rent, and agent take notes of the details:

- ▶ Are there laundry facilities?
- ▶ Is there a telephone line already connected?
- ▶ Do the light fittings work?
- ▶ Is the oven/ stove, gas or electrical?
- ▶ Do the toilet and shower all work?
- ▶ Is there damp or mould on the walls?
- ▶ Is there painting required?
- ▶ Is the place furnished? What kind of furniture?
- ▶ What kind of heating/cooling is there?
- ▶ Is there an insect/ pest problem?
- ▶ Is it close to transport, shops, and campus?
- ▶ Will the area be noisy? Is it on a busy road?
- ▶ Is there good security?
- ▶ Will the landlord carry out any repairs before you move in?
- ▶ How are repairs made once you live there, and who pays for which repairs?

CHOOSING A ROOMMATE

The task of choosing a roommate needs to be taken very seriously. The person or persons with whom you decide to live can affect the quality and productiveness of your international student experience in Australia. When the moment comes for you to make your decision concerning roommates, remember these tips: *don't panic, take your time, and don't compromise on important principles.*

BILLS AND EXPENSES

- ▶ Do you and your roommates expect to share the costs of buying toilet paper, washing powder for clothes and dishes, cleaning supplies etc. which is used by everyone?
- ▶ If you are answering an advertisement for a roommate, what does the rental price cover?
- ▶ Does it include utilities, or are they split equally when the accounts are due?
- ▶ Who will pay them and how will you all know they have been paid?

FOOD

- ▶ Do you and your roommates expect to share the costs of buying food and share in the preparation?
- ▶ Do you have specific food needs (allergies, preparation needs)?
- ▶ If your needs are for halal and your roommates are not, can you agree on respecting and upholding each other's needs?

CLEANING

- ▶ Who will clean what? And how often?
- ▶ Decide exactly what "clean and tidy" means to you.
- ▶ Will you hire a cleaning company to keep things under control?

PERSONAL HABITS & INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

How much privacy do you need?

- ▶ What hours do you usually sleep? Study? Relax? Socialise? Shower? Wash clothing?



SMOKING & DRUGS

- ▶ Do you prefer to have a smoker or non-smoker as a roommate? Is a smoker alright as long as they smoke outside the residence?
- ▶ (Many rental agreements will forbid smoking inside the premises) Clarify your stance on the use of alcohol and/or illicit substances.

MUSIC & TELEVISION

- ▶ What are your musical likes and dislikes?
- ▶ Do you watch TV every day or just once in a while? Do you like to study with or without music/TV?

PERSONALITY TRAITS & COMMUNICATION

- ▶ How do you perceive yourself? How do others perceive you?
- ▶ Do you enjoy being around a lot of people or just a few friends? Are you more comfortable by yourself?
- ▶ What about overnight visitors?
- ▶ When conflicts arise, how do you go about resolving them?
- ▶ How do you behave when you're happy - angry? What are the things that bother you most?
- ▶ Please keep in mind that not everyone can be trusted! Follow your instincts and do not room with someone you do not trust.

HOUSEKEEPING

Some international students who come to Australia have never had the need to do their own shopping, cooking, and house cleaning. If these activities are new to you, you will need to understand that in Australia unless you choose to hire someone from a home services company to do some of these things for you; these are the responsibility of each individual and are a sign of personal independence and becoming an adult.

Most Australians, especially landlords and rental agencies, believe it is very important for one's living environment to be kept clean. Our concern for cleanliness is evident when you visit the supermarket, where many varieties of cleaning products are sold.

KITCHEN STOVES & OVENS

Kitchen stoves may be either electric or gas. It is important to keep the burners and oven of an electric range clean so that they may operate safely and efficiently. Tenants should clean electric stove burners after each use to prevent food from hardening on them. The electric oven should also be cleaned periodically with an oven-cleaning product unless it is a "self-cleaning" oven, for which you should follow directions carefully.

REFRIGERATORS

Refrigerators should be defrosted periodically, when ice or frost in or around the freezing unit becomes evident. To defrost a refrigerator, one should turn it off, empty it, and allow the water from the melting frost to drip into a pan or the tray beneath the freezer. This may take overnight but can be done more rapidly if one puts a pan of hot water in the freezer. When the ice has melted, one should empty the tray of water into the sink. It is not a good idea to use sharp instruments to chip off the ice as they may damage the freezer and your eyes. A solution of baking soda and water can be used to clean the inside of the refrigerator. Some refrigerators automatically defrost themselves. The cooling grills on the back of a refrigerator should be vacuumed periodically to remove dust build-up, to enable the unit to refrigerate more efficiently. A refrigerator that does not work efficiently will cost you more on your electric utility bill.

DISPOSAL OF RUBBISH

Because insects such as ants and flies can be a problem, it is important for tenants to empty their rubbish every one to two days into the wheelie bins provided outside your accommodation. You will then put the wheelie bin/s out on the footpath once a week to be collected by council rubbish trucks. The landlord will inform the tenant about the way to dispose of garbage particularly with regards to recycling and the days your rubbish is collected.



CLEANING KITCHENS

Grease and oil from cooking collects on cabinet and refrigerator tops and walls, especially if occupants fry foods often. These areas should be cleaned often in order to avoid unpleasant odours and fire hazards.

CLEANING THE BATHROOM

Sinks, showers, and tubs may be cleaned with bathroom cleaning products from the supermarket. If a sink does not drain properly, ask the landlord or manager to look at it. Toilet bowls should be cleaned with a special toilet cleaning solution. A plunger may also be used for toilets that do not flush properly. Do not put any items or paper other than toilet paper in the toilet as this may block the pipes. If it is obvious that misuse of the unit has caused the need for repair, the landlord will charge you for the cost of repair or cleaning.

CLEANING FLOORS

Different types of floors will require different kinds of care. A landlord can recommend the way he/she prefers to have the floors cleaned. In apartments, the managers often maintain vacuum cleaners for tenant use. You can also buy vacuum cleaners at department stores. Upon leaving a dwelling, the occupant is usually expected to have the carpet professionally cleaned. The landlord can inform the tenant about proper cleaning procedures.

CLEANING PRODUCTS

Grocery stores and supermarkets stock many different products for cleaning. It is important to read labels carefully in order to understand proper uses and dangers of the products. (Warning: Keep all cleaning products out of reach of children and do not mix products!)

MAINTENANCE, FIXTURES & FITTINGS

You will be expected to replace light globes and keep fittings in your accommodation clean. If repairs or maintenance are required for example; a blocked toilet, the landlord should be consulted at the time. Generally, repairs will be the responsibility of the owner/landlord, unless caused by misuse of the item by the tenant or their visitors.



SMOKE ALARMS



Smoke alarms are devices that detect smoke and sound an alarm. Smoke alarms alert and wake people allowing valuable time to get out of a house during a fire. When you go to sleep, your sense of smell also goes to sleep. If there is a fire, toxic fumes may overcome you before you wake up. For your protection, a smoke alarm must be installed in your home.

ONLY WORKING SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES!

- ▶ Once a month you should check the battery by pressing the test button on the smoke alarm. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle to press the test button
- ▶ Keep them clean. Dust and debris can interfere with their operation, so vacuum over and around your smoke alarm regularly
- ▶ Replace the batteries yearly. Pick a public holiday or your birthday and replace the batteries each year on that day.
- ▶ When the battery is low the smoke alarm will sound a short 'BEEP' every minute or so. This is to alert you the battery is low and needs replacing.
- ▶ Smoke alarms must never be painted
- ▶ If cooking and smoke sets off the alarm, do not disable it. Turn on the range fan, open a window or wave a towel near the alarm
- ▶ Do not remove the batteries from your smoke alarm or cover your smoke alarm to prevent it from operating.

Where Can I Get Help?

TENANTS VICTORIA

tenantsvic.org.au

CONSUMER AFFAIRS VICTORIA

consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting

Living in Melbourne



As Australia's Education State, Melbourne is where research and innovation come together and contribute to solving global challenges. Victoria's vibrant multicultural society, high quality of living and social inclusion attracts around 182,000 international students each year.

If you're a fan of coffee, culture and incredible food, you'll love living in Melbourne. The Victorian capital is one of the most exciting and diverse in the country, offering a rich range of academic and employment prospects. Here are top 10 reasons to live and study in Melbourne as an international student.

MELBOURNE IS AUSTRALIA'S MOST LIVEABLE CITY

Melbourne was ranked the [#1 most liveable city](#) in Australia and #10 in the world in the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) Global Liveability Index for 2022. This list assesses 173 cities across the globe in the categories of stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure.

There are many reasons why life in Melbourne is so highly valued: there are multiple public transport options, relatively low crime rates, and plenty of jobs. Plus, it offers an awesome arts and culture scene, first-rate universities and an easy lifestyle.

MELBOURNE FEATURES TOP-TIER ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

A key part of living in Melbourne is deciding where to live in Melbourne. In other words, you'll need to choose the accommodation style best suited to your needs.

Fortunately, you'll be spoilt for choice! Melbourne is home to a wide range of high-quality accommodation options designed to suit the student lifestyle, including purpose-built student accommodation. Student accommodation is a particularly popular option among international students as it offers a unique sense of support and community. Plus, student accommodation features incredible amenities that can hugely improve your international study experience.

For example, [Scape Student Living](#) offers a wide range of perks to its residents. With fully furnished rooms, social spaces (like rooftop terraces and communal study areas), events, 24/7 on-site support, and even all-inclusive food offerings at some locations, you'll have everything you need and more to thrive as an international student in Australia. Best of all, Scape features locations across Melbourne, including Lincoln College, Franklin St, La Trobe and more!

See [How Much Does it Cost to Live in Melbourne as an International Student?](#) on Youtube.

MELBOURNE IS HOME TO WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION PROVIDERS AND RESEARCH FACILITIES

Victoria is known as the [Education State](#), so it should come as no surprise that Melbourne is very academic. According to the [QS World University Rankings 2023](#), several of its universities sit within the top-ranked universities in Australia and the world.

When living in Melbourne, you'll quickly recognise the city as a creative hub, home to world-class academics and an exciting entrepreneurial spirit. Before you know it, you'll soon be thinking outside the box (and around it, above it and below it, too).

MELBOURNE'S LANEWAY CULTURE IS RICH, VIVID AND EXCITING

Melbourne's winding alleyways are magical; they'll probably make you feel as though you've stepped into a real-life Wonderland. The city is well-known across Australia for its vibrant laneway culture, which is brimming with bustling shopping arcades, wandering musicians, live music, quiet street-side book cafes... and the occasional secret street party!

If you're in search of good food, take a wander down the colourful [Centre Place](#), where you'll find plenty of places to eat. For anyone into street art, a walk down the paint-splashed [Hosier Lane](#) will definitely inspire. Don't forget your camera!

See also: [6 Ways to Relieve Stress in Melbourne](#)



THE COFFEE IS INCREDIBLE

Can't survive without your morning caffeine hit? If you're a coffee-lover, we have great news: coffee culture in Melbourne runs deep. Thanks to Melbourne's champion baristas, the friendly neighbourhood vibe and the locals' love of supporting small businesses, Melbourne cafés serve up some of the best coffee in Australia – and perhaps even the world.

See also: [The Best Melbourne Cafés to Study In](#)

IT'S AUSTRALIA'S 'CULTURAL CAPITAL'

Melbourne's eccentricity, creativity and love of the arts are universally famous.

If you want to absorb some of Melbourne's culture, check out the [National Gallery of Victoria](#), the [Australian Centre for Contemporary Art](#) and the [Australian Centre for the Moving Image](#). Plus, the city is home to more underground arts movements, such as zine fairs (look out for Festival of the Photocopier), artist collectives, record stores, swing dancing clubs... the list goes on.

THE COMMUNITY IS HUGELY DIVERSE

Melbourne is a melting pot of communities and is home to many different cultural celebrations. The [Antipodes Festival](#), [Melbourne Italian Festa](#), [Chinese New Year](#), [TET Festival](#), the [Melbourne Fringe Festival](#) and the [Melbourne Queer Film Festival](#) are just some of the options on offer. Plus, make sure to check out the neighbourhoods that sit around the CBD. You'll find many different communities from all around the world in each one.

THE TRAMS ARE A LOT OF FUN

In Melbourne, trams are both a major form of public transport and one of the city's most famous icons. Melbourne locals tend to express genuine warmth for their tram system. What's more, Melbourne's trams can be just as colourful as the city itself: since 2013, the Melbourne International Arts Festival has worked with local artists to decorate trams with unique designs – [Art Trams!](#)

Learn more about [public transport in Melbourne](#).

MELBOURNE IS A GREAT PLACE FOR START-UPS

If you're an international student [looking to start your own business](#), living in Melbourne could be a smart move. There are many [small business grants](#) offered to ideas that display creativity, innovation, business readiness, financial viability and benefits to the city of Melbourne. Does that sound exciting? Well, it *could* be you!

MELBOURNE IS HOME TO BREATHTAKING NATURAL BEAUTY

Like the great outdoors? Then you'll love living in Melbourne! The city is home to a wide range of stunning outdoor settings, from beaches to parks and so much more.

Whether you're keen to lounge in the sun at St Kilda Beach, have a picnic in the Fitzroy Gardens or take a stroll along the Yarra River, there's no shortage of beautiful nature to explore.



Studying at AGE

Arrive Early

Australian education providers will provide an International Student Orientation before the commencement of classes and often before commencing local students attend an orientation. It is a requirement of the ESOS (Education Services for Overseas Students) Act 2001. Staff who run the orientation work hard to ensure that you as a student will be well equipped to achieve the best possible success in your studies. If you read through the pre-departure, arrival, and orientation manuals which the institution provides for you, you will see that there is a lot of information for you to understand and consider as you move through your studies. Although the manual will outline what you need to know, it is impossible to understand and recall everything. Once you are concentrating on your studies, you will feel less stressed if you are already comfortable with the institution, its staff and its services.

Arriving early gives you a chance to:

- ▶ See and talk to the most important people you will need to know at the institution:
 - International Office staff and their duties
 - Course or Academic Advisor
 - ESL Advisor (English as a Second Language)
 - Student Services staff
 - Religious/Cultural/Ministry staff
 - Accommodation/Homestay Coordinator
 - Counsellors
- ▶ Enrol early which will help you to get your student card early. You will need your student card to open bank accounts, borrow books from the library, and more.
- ▶ Meet and get advice from your Academic or Course Advisor
- ▶ Meet representatives of Student Associations, Clubs, and Mentors
- ▶ Find your way around the campus
 - Library
 - Computer rooms and facilities
 - Recreation and eating areas
 - Clubs and Associations
 - Classrooms
- ▶ Meet other international students who may share your classes, share your concerns or fears. Knowing another face on campus as you become more comfortable with the routines can really help you avoid any feelings of isolation.
- ▶ Find your way around the public transport/ City/ to and from your accommodation.
- ▶ Feel as though you already know some of the things local students know before you get to meet them at orientation activities later.

Student orientation

This AGE program for all students is an exciting and important event that marks the beginning of students' academic lives and careers. Orientation is designed for new students to familiarise themselves with the campus and courses at AGE and help students transition into campus life.

All new students are expected to attend Orientation and International Students must comply with their student visas. Orientation is usually held the Thursday prior to classes starting for each trimester. Students should check their letter of offer for Orientation dates or contact student services on 03 9822 3111 or support@guildmusic.edu.au.

What to do first

When you arrive at 376 Victoria St, North Melbourne, 3051, report to the Front Office where you will be greeted by AGE Student Service and Administration officers.



Course Orientation

All AGE students are required to attend orientation, during orientation week, AGE welcoming staff will go through a number of topics to give you the best chance at success.

DAY 1 – WELCOME SESSION TO AGE

This session includes an introduction to campus, Academic and Administration staff.

- ▶ Details are provided to the students about what courses AGE offers, and which staff members are responsible for which services and enquiries. An overview is provided on this content over the next 3 days.
- ▶ Students are taken on a tour of AGE identifying classrooms, student areas, student administration areas, and any other relevant areas, such as toilets, fire exits, and restricted areas; and are introduced to key staff, and where they are located.
- ▶ Information is provided to students on non-academic support services such as:
 - Information about policies and procedures generally, grievance procedures specifically, and how to access the services of the Student Support Officer.
 - CoE extensions
 - Accessing Support services, including referrals
 - How to access information on minimum wages and to know their rights as an employee.
 - Understanding compassionate and compelling circumstances.
 - Student Code of Conduct
 - Intro to Microsoft Office 365 account.

DAY 2 – ACADEMIC SERVICES

This session includes all relevant Academic Services and access to Academic Learning Support. The topics covered are:

- ▶ Applying for suspension or withdrawing from your unit of study, exams, supplement examination, assessments, extensions.
- ▶ An introduction to Canvas (AGE learning management system) and the associated student e-library system, the student portal included within Canvass.
- ▶ Academic Leaders taking the opportunity to explain to students the definition of different types of Academic Misconduct,
- ▶ An overview of AGE's academic policies, including Academic Misconduct and Course Progression.
- ▶ Importance of student engagement and reminding students what happens when they are identified as at risk of non-engagement (also known as at-risk).
- ▶ The students are invited to join the Student Representative Council(SRC) and express the value of being part of the student voice within the Institute and what the advantages are.
- ▶ An explanation is provided on what is academically expected of students.

DAY 3 – SPECIFIC COURSE INFORMATION

This session includes all relevant information on the relevant award the student is enrolled in. The session is led by the Discipline heads and or the Dean or the Associate Dean. The session for each award is held in a separate room (or link via Google Meets during COVID). During this session, the Academic Leaders will go through course-specific information.

DAY 4 – ACADEMIC INTEGRITY MODULE/ STUDY SKILLS INFORMATION SESSION

The unit is available in the Learning Management System and is managed by the Academic Learning Support Officer. Additionally, during this session, detailed information is provided to students on when the study skills workshops are offered and how to access Academic Learning Support that is not degree specific.



International Student Code of Conduct

AGE will provide each student with a Student Code of Conduct Agreement during orientation where the details will be explained, and the student will be able to ask questions prior to signing the agreement.

Policies and Procedures

AGE's policies and procedures are located at guildmusic.edu.au.

ADVANCED STANDING

Granting advanced standing ensures that students commence study at a level that appropriately recognises their prior learning experiences and they are not required to repeat equivalent learning successfully undertaken in another context. The Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure is designed to both maximise the credit students can gain for learning already undertaken and preserve the integrity of learning outcomes or discipline requirements of the award to which it applies.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

A number of approaches to course assessment are used by Institute staff. Assessment approaches may include written exams, written assignments, seminars/presentations and practical assignments.

Students will be given advance warning of the time and form of any assessment and will not be expected to sit an assessment they have not prepared for. If students fail an assessment they will be required to repeat the unit and pay any fees associated with repeating the unit. For further information on the assessment policy and process please refer to the Assessment Policy and Procedure.

COURSE DELIVERY

A number of approaches to course delivery are used by Institute staff. Course delivery approaches may include teacher-led lecture delivery, workshops, seminars, tutorials and supervised study. During class time students will be expected to participate by, for example, answering questions, giving opinions, demonstrating tasks, working with others in groups, making presentations and participating in role-playing situations.

GROUNDS FOR DEFERMENT, SUSPENSION OR CANCELLATION

Deferments, suspensions and cancellations are subject to specific rules in Australia. International students should be mindful that any change to their enrolment may affect their student visa.

See below for the relevant definitions that apply:

- ▶ **Absence:** Not attending any number of classes or weeks in a unit and semester in which a student has already enrolled.
- ▶ **Cancellation:** Institute-initiated termination of enrolment.
- ▶ **Deferment:** Delaying commencement of the course, i.e. delaying first (initial) semester only.
- ▶ **Extension:** increasing the duration and changing the expected completion date for a course.
- ▶ **International Student:** An onshore student with a student visa
- ▶ **Onshore Student:** A student studying at AGE whilst located within the geographical boundaries of Australia
- ▶ **Special Consideration:** This may be granted to students who apply for it on the grounds of serious circumstances outside their control that could affect an assessment.
- ▶ **Suspension/Leave of Absence:** Not effectively enrolling in any units for the whole of any single subsequent semester (after having already enrolled in and completed at least one semester).
- ▶ **Withdrawal:** Student-initiated termination of enrolment.



Deferments will only be granted prior to course commencement in the following circumstances:

- ▶ Student visa delay; or
- ▶ Compassionate or compelling circumstances.

Student-initiated suspensions will only be granted once the course has commenced and in the following circumstances:

- ▶ Compassionate or compelling circumstances; or
- ▶ For the balance of the semester and renewable for one more semester.

A student may only take a leave of absence through the formal application process. Students who take a leave of absence without approval will be categorised as having abandoned their studies, irrespective of the duration of time absent. Please note that students who are considered to have abandoned their studies forfeit their right to a refund.

All students are subject to the potential for AGE-initiated suspension of study or cancellation of enrolment in the event of either academic or non-academic misconduct, unsatisfactory academic performance or non-payment of tuition fees.

AGE may cancel a student's enrolment based on misbehaviour, failure to pay fees, breaching course progress or attendance requirements, or where the health or wellbeing of the student or others is at risk.

Opportunities to appeal a cancellation decision depends on individual circumstances. Students may appeal decisions regarding suspension.

In the instance where tuition fees are outstanding, a warning letter will be issued to the student providing seven (7) working days to make a payment or enter into a payment arrangement with AGE. If no payment or arrangement is made, or if the payment arrangement is broken, AGE will initiate a Cancellation of Enrolment

International students must be made aware that any change to their enrolment may affect their student visa.

QUALIFICATIONS TO BE ISSUED

Students completing all assessment requirements for a qualification will be awarded a testamur and an academic record. Students completing assessment requirements for part of a qualification will be awarded a record of results (at no cost) indicating which units of study they have successfully completed. Costs may be involved in the re-issuing of academic records or qualifications or for issuing an academic record before graduation.

Complaints and Appeals

All students have the right to:

- ▶ Appeal against certain academic and administrative decisions taken by AGE.
- ▶ Lodge a complaint if they feel they have been wrongly treated by AGE or its staff members.

International students should also be aware of the implications of AGE decisions for their enrolment and student visa status.

Students can enter a complaint at any time but should be aware that appeals need to be submitted within a set timeframe. For grade appeals, this needs to be within five (5) working days of a student receiving the results of that assessment task. For appealing a grievance outcome, the student must appeal within ten (10) working days of receipt of the decision. Appeals lodged outside of this timeframe may be dismissed.

International students should familiarise themselves with the relevant rights and responsibilities as international students. See the [International Students Factsheet](#).

If you wish to lodge an appeal or complaint, you can get advice on how to proceed from Student Services and Administration or by email ceo@guildmusic.edu.au

All formal complaints are to be directed to: CEO; Australian Guild of Education; 376 Victoria St, North Melbourne, 3051

For more information, refer to AGE's Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure.



Student Administration Information

PAYING FEES

Fees can be paid on campus via EFTPOS or electronically via the following details:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Account Name: | Australian Guild of Music Education |
| Bank Name: | Westpac |
| Account BSB: | 033 050 |
| Account number: | 22 80 55 |
| SWIFT Code: | WPACAU2S |

ENROLMENT

Once you are a student at AGE you will need to complete an enrolment teach teaching period to ensure that you are enrolled in the units you need to undertake with the teaching period. Enrolments are sent out to students once results are finalised for the previous teaching period.

| Teaching Period | Compulsory |
|-----------------|------------|
| Semester 1 | Yes |
| Semester 2 | Yes |
| Summer Semester | No |

You must enrol for each compulsory teaching period. If as an international student you do not, you will be cancelled.

ID CARDS

All AGE students will be issued with an Institute Student card that will assist in students obtaining student discounts where available at selected businesses within Australia.

REFUND AND CANCELLATION POLICY

AGE will provide refunds to students in accordance with its Fees and Refunds Policy and Procedure. The refund to be provided varies according to the times and circumstances in which it is sought, and the relevant milestones are delineated within the policy and procedure. For more information, refer to AGE's Fees and Refunds Policy and Procedure for International Students.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

All students at AGE are provided with access to a range of support services designed to assist students in achieving their expected learning outcomes and adjusting to life in Australia.

Studying can be a stressful time, particularly if you are away from your friends and family. Seventy-five per cent of Higher Education students experience depression or excessive stress at some stage throughout their studies.

Below are some tips to help you manage your physical and mental health while studying in Australia.

- ▶ Eat a balanced diet

This can be particularly difficult on a student's budget or if rushing between study and work. Try to include more fruit, vegetables and nuts as snacks and limit take-away or fast food. Studies have linked processed food to the overgrowth of bacteria in the gut that has been known to cause fatigue, depression and sugar cravings so it is important to balance them out with less processed food.

- ▶ Get enough sleep



This is area students often struggle with. Good sleep hygiene can make a huge difference to your mental health, energy levels, resistance to infections and ability to study. Try to get up at the same time every day, regardless of the time you go to bed. Having a routine you follow before going to bed helps the mind to get into sleep mode. Avoiding using devices in bed or half an hour before bedtime should help you get to sleep but that is not always possible. [F.lux](#) is a useful tool for students who prefer to study at night. It changes the lighting on your computer at sunset to a red spectrum to promote good sleep.

- ▶ Take a daily 30-minute walk

Exercise is essential for good academic performance. Walking gets the blood moving and activates the brain as well as the body. It is often useful to go for a walk if you are stuck on a particular assignment.

- ▶ Spend time talking with friends and family

It is difficult to find time to get everything done but it is important not to neglect social and family time. Make sure you take time during your week to socialize with friends outside of the classroom and mention if you are struggling. Most likely, you will find you are not the only one.

- ▶ Develop assignment writing and time management skills

A large proportion of stress felt by students is due to leaving assignments to the last minute or due to being unsure of what is required for an assignment. Our Academic Learning Support Officer provides seminars on time management and assignment writing and is available for one-on-one advice on academic skills for students to drop in or by appointment Mondays-Wednesdays. AGE tutors are available by email or for face-to-face meetings

to assist with any questions regarding lecture content or assignment requirements. Tutor availability is listed in the unit outline.



REFERRAL TO COUNSELLING SERVICES

For students who are struggling with balancing work, family and study requirements, having difficulty adjusting to a new culture, working through grief, dealing with family, financial or medical issues or another area that may negatively impact on mental health or ability to study, AGE can provide a referral to [Tonic Psychology](#). Students can request a referral to counselling using the student request form sent to the Registrar (support@guildmusic.edu.au). This service is provided free of charge and is confidential. It will not be mentioned to AGE staff, family members or other students if you choose to make use of this service.



Some apps to help deal with stress are listed below:

| App | Function | Apple | Android | Cost |
|---|---|-------|---------|----------------------------|
| <u>MindShift</u> | Mindshift is designed for young adults to help with anxiety, perfectionism, worry, social anxiety, performance anxiety or panic. By learning to think differently about your anxiety you can cope more effectively. | D | D | Free |
| <u>The Check-in</u> | Created by beyondblue to help young people help each other. The app guides how to start conversations about mental health with friends or family you think may be struggling, how best to respond to mental health issues and what you can do to offer support. | D | D | Free |
| <u>Happify</u> | The Happify app is a psychologist-approved mood-training program. It includes games, activity suggestions, gratitude prompts and more to train your brain to overcome negative thoughts. | D | D | Free (in-app purchases) |
| <u>Worry Time by ReachOut</u> | Schedule worrying into your day so your brain can move on to other matters. Also keeps a record of your worries so you can identify recurring problems and deal with them more effectively. | D | D | Free |
| <u>Lifesum</u> | Lifesum allows you to set personal goals, from eating healthier, to getting more exercise. You can also enter your own personal data and let Lifesum generate a "Life Score" to get a personalized roadmap to better health. | D | D | Free |
| <u>Smiling Mind</u> | Training in mindfulness is a technique shown to improve overall mental health, calmness and focus. | D | D | Free |



STUDY SKILLS WORKSHOPS

AGE provides extra modules and workshops to help students achieve the best possible results.

▶ Academic Study Skills Module:

This workshop focuses on research skills, essay writing, communication skills, referencing and time management for study. It is run by AGE's Academic Learning Support Officer.

▶ Language Development Module:

This workshop is useful for those wanting to improve their use of Academic English and communication skills. It is run by the Academic Learning Support Officer.

▶ Critical Thinking Module:

This new module is for students who want to improve their critical thinking and reasoning skills. It is run by the Dean.

Academic skills workshops are also held through the teaching period from 12-1 pm by the Academic Learning Support Officer for any student who wishes to attend.

Topics to be covered will include:

- ▶ Academic English
- ▶ Reading, research and study skills
- ▶ Essay writing skills
- ▶ Referencing skills
- ▶ Oral presentation skills
- ▶ Examination preparation and writing techniques.

There will be ample opportunity to ask and answer specific questions.

ACADEMIC LEARNING SUPPORT

The Institute provides students with individual Academic Skills consultations. Students are welcome to visit their lecturers and tutors to make appointments for additional consultations and assistance.

If you would like to discuss any concerns that you may have about your writing or any academic matter that is not limited to a specific unit, you can make an appointment with the Academic Learning Support Officer. The Officer will organise an individual consultation to help you with any specific study-related problem or issue.

Students can also drop in for consultations Monday to Wednesday on an individual basis with the Academic Learning Support Officer. A signup sheet to reserve a 15 min appointment can be done by email at support@guildmusic.edu.au.

Areas for which you might seek assistance include:

- ▶ Academic writing
- ▶ Assignment preparation
- ▶ Essay and report writing
- ▶ English language development
- ▶ Learning skills
- ▶ Academic integrity
- ▶ Presentation skills
- ▶ Referencing
- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Time management.



PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism means presenting the words or ideas of another person as your own.

This may include:

- ▶ too closely paraphrasing sentences, paragraphs or ideas
- ▶ copying the work of others without acknowledgement
- ▶ submitting their own previously submitted or assessed work without permission
- ▶ submitting work which has been produced by someone else and claiming authorship for it
- ▶ Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional.
- ▶ Either way, it is the student's responsibility.

RESOURCES

CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

<https://agme.instructure.com/>

MYAGE STUDENT INFORMATION

<https://agme.instructure.com/>

ACADEMIC DATABASE INTEGRATED LIBRARY IN MyAGE

<https://agme.instructure.com/>

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORT

AGE offers multiple Academic related support services.

The major resource available to students is the Academic Learning Support Officer. Study skills workshops are conducted throughout the teaching period either on campus or virtually. These cover the same topics each day for a week, to allow students on campus on different days to attend more easily, with a different topic each week.

The topics covered include:

- ▶ Academic English
- ▶ Reading, research and study skills
- ▶ Essay writing skills
- ▶ Referencing skills
- ▶ Oral presentation skills
- ▶ Examination preparation and writing techniques.

There will be ample opportunity to ask and answer specific questions.

During a teaching period, students identified as being at risk due to not meeting the progression rules are required to attend academic support meetings to assist with their learning and completing assessments, it is at this time that the student will enter a student learning agreement, where students are found to be at-risk at the end of a study period an Intervention Strategy plan will be put in place. This process is documented in the Student at Risk and Early Intervention Policy and Procedure and shows that intervention support is available as well as progression checking as documented in the Course Progress Policy and Procedure.

Staff who identify students, during the teaching period as having issues in undertaking their assessments refer the students to the Academic Learning and Support Officer.

In both cases, academic support continues until the person providing the support is of the opinion the student should be able to continue without assistance, but their performance (assessment results) is monitored to ensure they are performing in a manner that will see them pass the unit(s).

Email: support@quildmusic.edu.au



QUICK GUIDE TO KEY PERSONNEL

| Issues/s | Who to See |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| ACADEMIC | |
| Questions about content of units, teaching procedures or assessment | Lecturer |
| Questions about the program as a whole, academic regulations, difficulties with study, decisions to defer from study | Head of Discipline |
| Help with reading, writing, note taking, preparation for exams and assignments | Academic Learning Support Officer |
| ADMINISTRATIVE | |
| Visa and financial problems, enrolment, short-term accommodation, health care/insurance, academic progression, institution processes | Student Administration |

2024 KEY DATES

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mon 22 Jan | Summer School Commences |
| Fri 16 Feb | Summer School Census Date |
| Fri 26 Apr | Summer School Ends |
| Fri 3 May | Summer School Results Confirmed |
| Mon 20 May | Orientation Week Commences |
| Mon 27 May | Semester 1 Teaching Commences |
| Fri 14 Jun | Semester 1 Census Date |
| Fri 23 Aug | Semester 1 Ends |
| Fri 30 Aug | Semester 1 Results Confirmed |
| Mon 9 Sep | Orientation Week Semester 2 |
| Mon 16 Sep | Semester 2 Teaching Commences |
| Fri 4 Oct | Semester 2 Census Date |
| Sat 14 Dec | Semester 2 Ends |
| Fri 20 Dec | Semester 2 Results Confirmed |

CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

Granting credit for prior learning ensures that students commence study at a level that appropriately recognises their prior learning experiences and are not required to repeat equivalent learning successfully undertaken in another context.

AGE is committed to develop open and accessible guidelines to grant credit towards a course of study on the basis of prior learning, whether from formal studies or professional work experience.

For further information, please see AGE's Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure.

TIMETABLES

Your timetable for each teaching period will be published on your MyAGE site prior to the commencement of teaching.



ASSESSMENT, RESULTS AND MODERATION

- ▶ Your assessments will be submitted through Canvass to your lecturers
- ▶ Your results for each assessment will be recorded on Canvass
- ▶ Your results at the end of the semester are checked and moderated
- ▶ Moderated results mean they are compared to other students or other semesters.
- ▶ The final results are on the student portal
- ▶ No results on Canvass are the final results.

Safety and Security on Campus

Australian Guild of Education ensures that student safety remains paramount to its operations. To ensure that AGE can uphold its staff and students' safety the following measurements are active:

- ▶ Lift access is only available during campus operating and lecturing hours.
- ▶ The facility is monitored by CCTV cameras such that in the event of an incident there may be footage available with the footage deleted after 14 days.
- ▶ In the event of an incident, staff and students are encouraged to report it to the Registrar and/or the Dean within 7 days to ensure that the Critical Incident Team can follow up with an investigation.

AGE's 'Designated Officer' is the CEO or Registrar (support@guildmusic.edu.au).

In the event of a critical incident, please notify the designated officer as soon as practically possible via email by completing the critical incident report, which can be accessed via the website.

Some resources to help you stay safe are listed below:

| App | Function | Apple | Android | Cost |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------|---------|------|
| <u>Emergency Plus</u> | This app has been developed by Australian Emergency services and the Australian government to assist emergency services to locate people calling from their mobile phone. It lists emergency phone numbers, gives GPS coordinates that can be given to Emergency Services to help them locate you and allows you to call emergency services in-app. | D | D | Free |
| <u>First Aid</u> | Created by St John's Ambulance Australia this app presents step by step emergency first aid information. It is designed for use by medical professionals but is useful to have on hand for anyone in an emergency. | D | D | Free |
| <u>Beachsafe</u> | Created by Surf Lifesaving Australia it gives a list of beaches near your location including if they are patrolled by lifeguards and what times they are patrolled, weather, tides information and water temperature at that beach, any beach closures due to dangerous conditions and tips on beach safety. | D | D | Free |
| <u>VicEmergency</u> | VicEmergency is the official Victorian Government app for emergency warnings and information about fire, floods, storms, earthquakes and shark sightings. Download VicEmergency, set up a user profile and watch zones to ensure you receive official warnings and information for areas that interest you. | D | D | Free |

| App | Function | Apple | Android | Cost |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------|---------|----------------------------|
| <u>ABC listen</u> | The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) is responsible for emergency broadcasts. If travelling in a regional area with a flood or fire warning you can tune into the local ABC station for live emergency updates, road closures, watch and wait alerts and evacuation orders. This information can also be found on the <u>ABC</u> website. Be aware in a rapidly changing environment the information may be out of date so give precedence to any instructions given to you by local law enforcement or emergency personnel. | D | D | Free |
| <u>bSafe</u> | A personal safety app that can be used to notify friends if you are in an emergency including a function to allow you to notify your friends when you have arrived safely and an SOS button that will alert pre-selected 'guardians' with your location. | D | D | Free (in-app purchases) |
| <u>My Safetipin</u> | Personal safety app that provides safety scores for locations and will alert you if you enter an area with an unsafe rating. | D | D | Free |

For further details on how to stay safe in Australia, please visit [Study Australia](#).

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

A range of legislation applies to all staff and students as listed in this section.

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure the requirements of relevant legislation are met at all times. Use the websites indicated or contact Student Services and Administration if you require further information.

There may be additional, course-specific, legislation that is relevant. Information about this legislation will be communicated during the course.

- ▶ [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#)
- ▶ [The Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Legislation Amendment Act 2011](#)
- ▶ [The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#)
- ▶ [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#)
- ▶ [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011](#)
- ▶ [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)
- ▶ [The Copyright Act 1968](#)
- ▶ [Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#)
- ▶ [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#)
- ▶ [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- ▶ [Privacy Act 1988](#)
- ▶ [Occupational Health and Safety \(Commonwealth Employment\) Amendment \(Employee Involvement and Compliance\) Act 2004](#)





Living in Australia

Cost of Living and Money Matters

MONEY AND BANKS

The Australian currency is the only legal tender in Australia. When you first arrive, money from other countries can be changed at the exchange facilities located at international airports, banks, major hotels and currency exchange kiosks in major shopping centres. Traveller's cheques are easier to use if already in Australian dollars; however, banks will cash traveller's cheques in virtually any currency. Major hotels and some shops, depending on individual store policy, will cash traveller's cheques.

It is a good idea to set up an Australian bank account. You will need to provide your visa and evidence of residency. All major banks have a branch in cities and regional centres. Most shopping centres have Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) facilities. These machines can be used for withdrawals and, in many instances, deposits 24 hours a day.

Normal bank trading hours:

- ▶ 9.30 am – 4.00 pm Monday to Thursday
- ▶ 9.30 am – 5.00 pm Friday

Some banks are open Saturday mornings.

CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards are widely accepted around Australia. The most commonly accepted credit cards are Visa and Mastercard. Be aware that not all shops will accept American Express or Diners Club International cards. Some businesses will charge a surcharge for using credit cards to make payments.

TIPPING

Tipping is not the general custom in Australia and service charges are not added to accounts by hotels and restaurants. In better-class restaurants, it is usual to tip food and drinks waiters up to 10% of the bill for good service. However, at any time, tipping is a matter of individual choice.

STUDENT DISCOUNTS

While international students do not qualify for student discounts on Australian public transport, your AGE student card can be used to qualify you for student discounts at some events and businesses around Melbourne, such as the Royal Melbourne Show and cinemas. This is often a significant discount so remember to take your student card when going to events.

ACCOMMODATION

The following types of accommodation are available for International students:

- ▶ Hostels and Guesthouses – \$90 to \$150 per week
- ▶ Shared Rental – \$95 to \$215 per week
- ▶ Homestay – \$235 to \$325 per week
- ▶ Rental – \$185 to \$440 per week



OTHER LIVING EXPENSES

- ▶ Groceries and eating out - \$140 to \$280 per week
- ▶ Gas, electricity - \$10 to \$20 per week
- ▶ Phone and Internet - \$15 to \$30 per week
- ▶ Public transport - \$30 to \$60 per week
- ▶ Car (after purchase) - \$150 to \$260 per week
- ▶ Entertainment - \$80 to \$150 per week

See also [Cost of Living Calculator](#) at StudyAustralia.

OVERSEAS STUDENT HEALTH COVER (OSHC)

International students are required by the Government to join a private health insurance scheme. The OSHC premium cover must be paid before a student visa is issued. You will need to pay the OSHC premium at the same time as the tuition fees. The OSHC entitles you to free hospital cover and 85% of standard doctors' fees.

ANNUAL COST OF LIVING

Melbourne is a reasonably priced city providing a good quality affordable living. You should work out a budget covering accommodation, food, transport, clothing and entertainment. Childcare, or child schooling costs, if applicable, should also be taken into account. Up to date details can be found at studyaustralia.gov.au or you can use the cost of living calculator at [Insider Guides](#).

The average international student in Australia spends about \$440 per week on accommodation, food, clothing, entertainment, transport, international and domestic travel, telephone and incidental costs. While this is a realistic guide, it is important to remember that individual circumstances will vary by location, course and lifestyle and that Melbourne is one of the more expensive places to live in Australia.

The cost of living depends on the kind of accommodation a student chooses. A married student with dependents will need approximately an additional AU\$3,152 per year for each dependent plus AU\$7,362 for their spouse or partner for housing costs.

RETAIL

AGE Victoria Street Campus is located a stone throw away from Melbourne's CBD and its retail, cultural and dining districts.

For more information about Australian values and principles, please read the [Life in Australia booklet](#) from the Department of Home Affairs.

Some apps to help you keep within your budget are:

| App | Description | Apple | Android | Cost |
|------------------------------|---|-------|---------|----------------------------|
| PocketGuard | Create a budget and keep track of saving and overspending. | D | D | Free (in-app purchases) |
| Splitwise | Helps you to keep track of shared expenses such as restaurant meals or household bills. | D | D | Free (in-app purchases) |
| Student Edge | Student discount app. | D | D | Free |
| UniDays | Student discount app. | D | D | Free |
| Gumtree | Trading post site for services and second-hand goods. | D | D | Free |



Managing Finances

SETTING UP A BANK ACCOUNT

You can choose to open an account in any Bank, Credit Union or Building Society in Australia. Do your research to get the best deal.

To open a bank account, you will need:

- ▶ your passport (with arrival date stamped by Australian immigration)
- ▶ student ID card
- ▶ money to deposit into the account (this can be as little as \$10)

Anyone who wishes to open a bank account in Australia must show several pieces of personal identification which are allotted a points system. 100 points of identification is required to establish your identity as the person who will be named in the account. Your passport and proof of your arrival date in Australia will be acceptable as 100 points IF you open an account within six weeks of arrival in Australia. After this time you will be required to produce additional documentation. As a student you will be able to open an account with special student benefits. Many banks have 'Student Accounts' which contain no or minimal fees for transactions that might normally be attached to regular savings accounts. You will also require the student ID card from your institution to prove you are a student and should have access to the benefits offered by a student bank account.

Most people in Australia enjoy the convenience of Internet banking and/or Telephone banking, which enables them to manage their money, pay bills etc. from home. At the time you are setting up your account you can request these services from your bank.

BANK AND ATM LOCATIONS IN MELBOURNE

- ▶ ANZ anz.com.au
- ▶ Commonwealth Bank commbank.com.au
- ▶ Credit Union Australia cua.com.au
- ▶ National Australia Bank nab.com.au
- ▶ St George Bank stgeorge.com.au
- ▶ Westpac Bank westpac.com.au

Note that this is just a sample of some of the major financial institutions in Australia.

BANKING HOURS

Most bank branches are open from Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:00pm (except on public holidays). Some branches have extended trading hours during the week and may be open Saturdays (check with your individual bank). ATMs remain open 24 hours a day. However, you should be aware of your personal safety if accessing cash from an ATM at night in quiet areas where there are not a lot of people around.

BANK FEES

Bank fees are the price you pay for the products and services that banks offer. Different banks charge different fees for different products and services, and the best way to find out what fees apply is simply to ask your bank. Any fees that apply to your accounts are fully disclosed in information leaflets and terms and conditions that your bank can provide before you open your account. Some banks waive some fees if you are a full-time student and nominate a student account. The way you do your banking may also affect the fees that apply for example: internet banking rather than walking into a branch.

If you don't understand any fee which has been charged, contact your bank.

ACCESSING MONEY FROM MY ACCOUNT

Bank accounts offer lots of options for accessing your money. Some of the most popular options are described below.



ATMs (AUTOMATIC TELLER MACHINES)

ATMs can be used to withdraw cash from an account by using the ATM card which is available with most bank accounts. You can also use ATMs to get an account balance and transfer money into other accounts. Some ATMs also allow you to deposit cash and cheques into your account. Using the ATMs of your bank will generally cost less money than if you use another bank's ATMs. Fees for using ATMs can vary between banks and between accounts.

See also: *Using an ATM.*

EFTPOS

Short for 'Electronic Funds Transfer at Point Of Sale', EFTPOS terminals can be found where goods or services are sold, for example, supermarkets, service stations, restaurants, doctors' surgeries and gymnasiums. You can pay for goods and make payments through EFTPOS using your ATM card, rather than paying with cash. At some stores, when you use EFTPOS you can also withdraw cash from your account at the same time. You should be aware that there are some retailers who put limits on how much cash can be withdrawn which may be dependent on the amount which is spent in the store.

When paying by EFTPOS, you also use your PIN to access your account. The same rules apply about keeping the PIN confidential and never handing it over to anyone. Be careful no-one is looking over your shoulder when you enter your PIN. See: *Using an ATM.*

TELEPHONE BANKING

You can use telephone banking to transfer payments to and from accounts, get your account balances, get recent transaction information and pay bills. You will need to register to use telephone banking and will then be given a password or an identification number that allows you to access your accounts over the phone. It's important never to give your password to anyone else.

INTERNET BANKING

Internet banking allows you to view and check your accounts, review recent transactions, apply for loans and credit cards, or transfer money and pay bills – all on-line. Most banks offer Internet banking facilities, but you will need to register with your bank to gain access. You will then be given a password that allows you to use your accounts on-line. Never give this password to anyone else.

There are security issues that need to be considered when using Internet banking. It is recommended that you install and keep up-to-date anti-virus software and a firewall, update security patches and be suspicious of emails requesting you to hand over confidential information such as your Internet banking logon password. Your bank will never ask you for this information, especially in an email. In addition, many banks publish security guides on their websites and this provides important information on precautions that you can take to protect your information on-line. If you are unsure about any approach that appears to be from your bank to provide personal information. Refuse to provide that information until you can attend your nearest branch to discuss the request over the counter with bank staff. There is no charge for discussing your banking options at a branch.

OVER-THE-COUNTER SERVICE

You can also go into a branch of your bank and, with the assistance of bank staff, conduct transactions including withdrawals, deposits, transfers, and account balance checks. If you do not have a branch close by, you may be able to visit an agency of your branch, such as an Australia Post outlet, to conduct certain transactions. Bear in mind that over-the-counter transactions usually incur higher fees than electronic transactions.

PAYING BILLS

Most bank accounts offer lots of easy options for paying bills. Transaction accounts with cheque book facilities allow you to pay bills by cheque, and most transaction accounts and savings accounts allow you to pay bills electronically (e.g., using facilities such as telephone banking, Internet banking) and using direct debits.

A note of caution on direct debits – they are a convenient way to pay everyday bills, but always make sure you've got enough money in your account to cover the cost of the debit. If your pay or allowance goes into your account on a certain



date, make sure your direct debit payments are scheduled to come out of your account after your pay goes in, or you might end up with an overdrawn account or a dishonoured payment – both can cost you money.

ACCOUNT STATEMENTS

Most banks will provide regular statements for your accounts (just how regular can depend on the type of account). On request, banks will provide statements on a deposit account at more frequent intervals, but this may attract a fee. Bank statements are your record of everything that has happened in your account over a given period – the withdrawals, deposits and transfers that were made, and any bank fees and government taxes you were charged. Telephone and Internet banking can make it easy to check your statements, and some banks even offer ‘mini statements’ through their own ATMs.

Check your statements regularly to make sure you’ve got enough money in your account to cover your expenses and keep track of your spending, as well as make sure that all transactions made in your account are legitimate. Refer to your statements to see what fees you are paying on your bank accounts and why, and to see whether a few simple changes to your banking habits could help you to reduce the fees you pay (for example, using your own bank’s ATMs instead of other banks’ ATMs).

USING AN ATM

You will be given a PIN (Personal Identification Number) which you will enter into the ATM to access your account. It is the key to your account and it is important that you never tell anyone your PIN. A bank or reputable business will never ask you for your PIN. If anyone does, be suspicious, don’t hand it over and report the incident to the bank and the police. Be careful no-one is looking over your shoulder when you enter your PIN.

These general rules should be followed for ATM safety, especially at night:

- ▶ Minimise your time at the ATM by having your card ready when you approach the machine.
- ▶ Take a look around as you approach the ATM and if there’s anything suspicious, don’t use the machine at that time (report any suspicions to the police).
- ▶ If you don’t feel comfortable using a particular ATM, consider continuing on to another branch or using off-street ATMs.
- ▶ Do remember that EFTPOS can be used to withdraw cash at many other places, like supermarkets and service stations.
- ▶ If you simply want to check your account balance or transfer funds between accounts, telephone or Internet banking can be used instead of an ATM.
- ▶ If your ATM or credit card is lost or stolen (or if your PIN has been revealed to another person), notify your bank immediately. This will enable your bank to put a stop on your card immediately so that no one else can use it and get access to your money. Most banks have a 24- hour telephone number for reporting lost cards – it’s a good idea to keep a record of this number handy at all times, just in case. If you don’t know the number, ask your bank.

SAFETY WHEN CARRYING MONEY

- ▶ The first and fundamental rule of safety when carrying money is: “Don’t carry large amounts of cash!”
- ▶ The second is: “Don’t advertise the fact that you are carrying money!”
- ▶ Divide your cash into different locations on your person (front pocket, coat pocket, shoes, etc).
- ▶ Keep your wallet in one of your front pockets at all times.
- ▶ Do not carry cash in a backpack or back pocket.
- ▶ Sew a small money pocket into the cuff of a trouser, sleeve of a shirt or even a bra.
- ▶ Divide your bank/credit cards and keep them in separate locations.
- ▶ Do not place money or valuables in lockers.
- ▶ Be very careful how you carry your handbag, and never leave it open.



Working in Australia

Like many international students, you may get a part-time or casual job to help pay your living expenses while you study in Australia. It is important that you know your rights in the workplace.

All people working in Australia have basic rights and protections in the workplace, including minimum pay and conditions. The Fair Work Ombudsman makes sure that these rights are protected and enforced fairly under Australia's workplace laws.

The [International Students Factsheet](#) will help you understand your basic workplace rights, where to obtain further information, and how to seek assistance from the Fair Work Ombudsman.

For more information, contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 or visit fairwork.gov.au. See also [Rights and Obligations for International Students](#).

Under your visa requirements the Department of Home Affairs allows you to work whilst you study for up to 40 hours per fortnight. You cannot work until you have commenced your course in Australia. Once your course has commenced you are permitted to work a maximum of 40 hours per fortnight when your course is in session and unlimited hours when your course is not in session. Work that is a formal registered part of your course is not included in the limit of 40 hours per fortnight. Voluntary work is exempt from this limit with some [exceptions](#).

For additional information about work conditions for student visa holders please visit the [Department of Home Affairs](#) website.

Australia has a minimum wage and it is against the law for an employer to pay you less than that wage even if you agree. The minimum wage varies depending on your age if you are a casual or permanent worker, your industry and the position. For more information about the minimum wage visit the [Fair Work](#) website.

TAX FILE NUMBER

All workers in Australia need a Tax File Number (TFN). When starting a new job, you need to inform your employer of your TFN by completing a Tax File Number Declaration form. International students pay tax on their earnings. For further information please visit the [Australian Taxation Office](#) website. At the end of each financial year, international students need to apply for their tax returns through an accountant.

Some sites to assist students in finding part-time work:

| Site | Description |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Seek | Australia's largest job search site. |
| CareerOne | A job search site. |
| Jora | A job search site. |
| Australia Jobsearch | A job search site run by the Australian government designed to help people on unemployment benefits find work. Contains advice on job searching, resume writing and interview skills along with job listings. Some of the functions, such as being matched with a job provider, can only be used by people on Centrelink benefits but there is a range of useful information available to everyone. Anyone can apply for jobs listed on this site. |
| GO | Matches people with short term contract jobs. |
| Gumtree | Classified ads are usually for one-off jobs, trade jobs or freelance jobs. |
| Air Tasker | One-off job site where people post tasks they need help with and what they are willing to pay. |



SUPERANNUATION

If your monthly wage is more than AU\$450, your employer must contribute an additional sum equal to 10.5% of your wage into a superannuation (pension) account for you. In most cases, you can access your contributions when you leave Australia permanently, although the contributions will be taxed.

To check your eligibility to claim your superannuation and to apply for your payment, visit the [Australian Taxation Office](#). You will need to provide the details of your superannuation fund.

Emergency Services

TELEPHONES

CALLING EMERGENCY SERVICES – DIAL 000

In Australia dial 000 from any phone for **fire, police or ambulance** services. **112** may also be dialled from mobile phones. Dialling **112** will override key locks on mobile phones and therefore save time. Emergency Services operators answer this number quickly and to save time will say, "Police, Fire, or Ambulance". If you are unsure of what emergency service you need tell the operator what the emergency is. You will then be connected to the appropriate service to assist. It is wise to think ahead with the most important information which will help them to respond. Where you are; (note street names and the closest intersection), what has happened and to whom; what their condition is. The operator may then ask you to stay on the phone until the emergency services arrive. In life threatening situations the operator may also give you some instructions to assist until the emergency unit arrives. If you are concerned about your English, remain calm and work with the operators who are very experienced with all cultures.

PUBLIC TELEPHONES



Australia has an extensive network of Public Phones throughout the country. They are easily recognized by the orange and blue Telstra emblem. The cost of local calls is 50 cents (AUD) with most phones accepting coins and prepaid telephone cards. Long distance call charges vary depending on time of day and distance.

Sundays are an excellent day to make interstate or international calls due to all day discount rates.

Pre-Paid telephone cards offer competitive calling rates to all countries 24 hours per day. Pre-Paid Telephone Cards cost \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$50 and may be purchased at most news agencies, post offices and convenience stores.

MAKING PHONE CALLS WITHIN AUSTRALIA

- ▶ To make **international** phone calls:
 - Dial – international access code (0011) plus the country code plus the area code (if required)
 - + phone number (when adding a country code to a number, any leading 0 (zero) on the area code following it is NOT dialled.)
- ▶ To make **domestic** phone calls: Dial – the area code + phone number

| Area Code | Australian States and Territories |
|-----------|---|
| (02) | Australian Capital Territory (ACT) New South Wales (NSW) |
| (03) | Tasmania (TAS) Victoria (VIC) |
| (07) | Queensland (QLD) |
| (08) | Northern Territory (NT) South Australia (SA) Western Australia (WA) |



Visit [White Pages](#) and [Yellow Pages](#) for directories of residential, commercial and government phone numbers in Australia and for a list of country codes and area codes for international calls.

CALLING AUSTRALIA FROM OVERSEAS

To contact Australia, first dial the international access code from that country (this will vary in each country), then Australia's country code prefix (61) followed by the area code without the first zero (for instance Melbourne will be 3 instead of 03), and then dial the required number.

- ▶ Example: International access number +61 3 9999 3662

MOBILE/CELL PHONES

Before bringing your mobile phone to Australia check with the [Australian Communications and Media Authority](#) to make sure it can operate here. Some countries, such as Japan and the USA, use mobile phone networks that are not available in Australia. If not, you can buy your mobile phone in Australia. Australian telecommunications providers offer a wide range of services which provide a mobile phone within the cost of using that service. There are many differences to the services provided. You should understand what deal you are accepting before signing a contract with a provider.

Below are links to some mobile carrier companies in Australia:

- ▶ [Telstra](#)
- ▶ [Optus](#)
- ▶ [TPG](#)
- ▶ [Vodafone](#)
- ▶ [Dodo](#)

COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCESS



Many of the above companies will also provide you with internet access. In fact, you may be able to make arrangements with a company where you can get cheaper rates if you have internet and mobile phone through the one service provider. In addition, with providers Telstra and Optus, you could get a packaged deal for your home phone, internet and mobile phone. AGE has a designated computer lab and additional computers available for use in the student lounge areas. Students are welcome to use the AGE computers at any time.

AUSTRALIA POST

[Australia Post](#) is one of our nation's largest communications, logistics and distribution businesses and is committed to providing high quality mail and parcel services to all people within Australia.

- ▶ [Calculate Postage](#)
- ▶ [Find Post Office Locations](#)
- ▶ [Domestic and International Stamp Prices](#)

SMALL LETTERS

The cost of posting a small letter for distribution in Australia is an AU\$1.10 postage stamp which you affix to the envelope.

A small letter has the following characteristics:

- ▶ No larger than 130mm x 240mm
- ▶ No thicker than 5mm
- ▶ Maximum weight 250g.

ENVELOPE LAYOUT

Australia Post uses advanced letter sorting technology to read the address on each envelope electronically. These machines work best when address formats are structured in a consistent manner. That is why it is necessary to address your mail clearly and correctly. The information below demonstrates how.



See also:

- ▶ [Calculate Postage](#)
- ▶ [Find Post Office Locations](#)
- ▶ [Domestic and International Stamp Prices](#)

Shopping

BARGAINING/HAGGLING

When shopping in Australia, you generally don't bargain or barter (also called haggling) for the price of an item. The displayed price for items is fixed and if Australian GST (Goods & Services Tax) is applicable it will already be included in the displayed price. However, there are exceptions to this rule. There are places and circumstances in which it is perfectly acceptable to barter for the best price possible. These may include at garage sales, community markets, second hand dealerships, or at electrical goods' stores, furniture shops, or when purchasing a motor vehicle if you are offering to pay in cash or have seen the item at a competitor store for a better price.

If you are paying by CASH and, if you are buying more than one item, you may have more bargaining power. Begin the bargaining process by asking:

- ▶ "What's the best price you can give me?"

Or at a garage sale, you might pick up several items whose combined total is \$50 and say:

- ▶ "I'll offer you \$30 for all of these."



PURCHASING AN ITEM

The most common methods of purchasing items are by cash or *EFTPOS*. EFTPOS (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale) allows you to use the card attached to your Australian bank account to make purchases and withdraw cash at the same time (at the retailer's discretion) from more than 103,000 merchants across Australia. Just swipe your keycard through the EFTPOS card reader, select your account type and enter your PIN number. EFTPOS is available at most supermarkets, petrol stations and retail outlets. Just look for the EFTPOS sign. You can choose to make the EFTPOS transaction from your savings account, cheque account or credit card. You receive a printed receipt after each purchase and the transaction appears on your statement.

YELLOW PAGES

The Yellow Pages are a telephone directory or section of a directory (usually printed on yellow paper) where business products and services are listed alphabetically. They are a GREAT time-saver and very useful when you are looking for specific products or services. *"Let your fingers do the walking!"* These books may be provided in rental properties and are available at Post Offices around Australia.

Health and Safety

EMERGENCIES – DIAL 000

The Triple Zero (000) service is the quickest way to get the right emergency service to help you. It should be used to contact Police, Fire or Ambulance services in **life threatening** or **emergency situations** only. Emergency 000 lines should not be used for general medical assistance.

POLICE

In Australia police protect people and properties, detect and prevent crime, and preserve peace for everyone. They are not connected to the military or politics. The police can help you feel safe. In a non-emergency situation you can contact **Victoria Police** on **131 444** or find your local police station at [police.vic.gov.au/location](https://www.police.vic.gov.au/location).

FIRE

The fire brigade extinguishes fires, rescues people from fires in cars and buildings, and helps in situations where gas or chemicals become a danger. As soon as a fire starts **dial 000** no matter how small or large the fire may be.

AMBULANCE

Ambulances provide immediate medical attention and emergency transportation to hospital. **Dial 000**.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

The State Emergency Service (SES) is an emergency and rescue service dedicated to providing assistance in natural disasters, rescues, road crashes and extreme weather conditions. It is made up almost entirely of volunteers and operates in all States and Territories in Australia. For emergency assistance in a flood or storm, dial **132 500**.

LIFELINE

Lifeline's **13 11 14** service is staffed by trained volunteer telephone counsellors who are ready to take calls 24-hour a day, any day of the week from anywhere in Australia. These volunteers operate from Lifeline Centres in every State and Territory around Australia.

Anyone can call Lifeline. The service offers a counselling service that respects everyone's right to be heard, understood and cared for. They also provide information about other support services that are available in communities around Australia. Lifeline telephone counsellors are ready to talk and listen no matter how big or how small the problem might seem. They are trained to offer emotional support in times of crisis or when callers may be feeling low or in need of advice.



POISONS INFORMATION LINE

The poisons information line provides the public and health professionals with prompt, up-to-date and appropriate information, and advice to assist in the management of poisonings and suspected poisonings. The seriousness of a poisoning situation is assessed after a detailed history is obtained from the caller. Members of the public may be then given first aid instructions, information on possible symptoms, and advised on the need for assessment by a doctor or referral to hospital. The Australia-wide Poisons Information Centres have a common telephone number: **131 126**.

EMERGENCY TRANSLATION

For translation service in an emergency situation dial **1300 655 010**.

OVERSEAS STUDENT HEALTH COVER (OSHC)

Overseas student health cover (OSHC) is insurance that provides cover for the costs of medical and hospital care which international students may need while in Australia and is mandatory for international student visa holders. OSHC will also cover the cost of emergency ambulance transport and most prescription drugs.

HOW DO I GET OSHC?

You may be or have been asked for an OSHC payment in the education offer package you receive from your chosen education provider, if they have a preferred provider agreement and don't need to complete a formal application form. If not, you may need to complete an Application for OSHC which is available from registered OSHC providers and most educational institutions. Your local education adviser can lodge your OSHC form and payment at time of processing your enrolment to study in Australia.

Only Australian health funds that have signed an agreement with the Australian Government can provide OSHC. Most Australian education institutions have a preferred OSHC provider. Depending on the institution you will be attending you will be required to join one of these four registered health funds. You may choose to change your health fund at any time but will need to abide by the conditions of change of the health fund provider you are leaving.

Students may also take out additional cover in the form of Extra OSHC and students who could not previously access OSHC may now be able to access Optional OSHC. Some students may be exempt from enrolling in the OSHC such as students from countries whose Governments may have Reciprocal Health Agreements for students in Australia. Note: only some reciprocal health agreements cover students in Australia, some will only cover visitors. You should determine if you are eligible before you apply for your visa to come to Australia.

Further information on OSHC can be found at: [Overseas Student Health Cover](#)

OSHC PROVIDERS

- ▶ Medibank Private: [medibank.com.au](https://www.medibank.com.au)
- ▶ OSHC Worldcare: [oshcworldcare.com.au](https://www.oshcworldcare.com.au)
- ▶ Australian Health Management: [ahm.com.au](https://www.ahm.com.au)
- ▶ BUPA OSHC: [overseasstudenthealth.com](https://www.overseasstudenthealth.com)

If you come to Australia on a visa other than a student visa and undertake a short course of study of three months duration or less you will not be eligible for OSHC. It is wise to purchase travel or private medical insurance in this case.

WHAT AM I COVERED FOR?

OSHC provides a safety net for medical expenses for international students, similar to that provided to Australians through Medicare. Additionally, OSHC includes access to some private hospitals and day surgeries, ambulance cover and benefits for pharmaceuticals.

HOW DO I USE MY OSHC CARD?

If you need to visit a doctor or medical centre, show your card at the end of the visit. You will be charged the doctor's fee and the government fee component of that may be processed by the medical centre. If the medical centre is not able to process the government fee, pay the total amount, keep the receipt and you can claim the government fee back from your OSHC provider.



TYPES OF HEALTH CARE IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian healthcare system is mixed. Responsibilities for healthcare are divided between the Federal and State governments, and both the public and the private sectors play a role. Government programs underpin the key aspects of healthcare. Medicare, which is funded out of general tax revenue, pays for hospital and medical services. Medicare covers all Australian citizens, pays the entire cost of treatment in a public hospital, and reimburses for visits to doctors.

PUBLIC SYSTEM

The major provider of healthcare services in Australia is the Public Health System (Medicare). The Public Health System provides a comprehensive free-of-charge healthcare service for all Australian citizens covering both hospital-based and community-based medical services. Public hospitals are owned by the State. One of the problems with such a system is that waiting times in public hospitals can be extensive due to a shortage of healthcare professionals and facilities.

See also: *Attending an Australian hospital.*

PRIVATE SYSTEM

Private hospitals provide about a quarter of all hospital beds in Australia. Private medical practitioners provide most non-bed medical services and perform a large proportion of hospital services alongside salaried doctors. Most dental services are provided by private practitioners. For Australians who take out private health insurance a range of services can be covered, such as access to your own Doctor in a private hospital, and extra services such as dental, optical and physiotherapy.

ATTENDING AN AUSTRALIAN HOSPITAL

Few private hospitals have emergency departments, so, in an emergency, most Australians rely on the public hospital system. If you attend an Emergency Department in a hospital you will be attended to immediately by a triage nurse for information about you, your cover, and your current health condition. The triage nurse will determine the urgency of your condition in comparison to others in need in the emergency room and it is likely that you will remain at the emergency room for several hours. Whether you are seen immediately by a Doctor, or have to wait, it is customary to keep you in the emergency room for several hours to monitor your condition before releasing you to go home or admitting you to hospital in more severe cases.

There are extensive waiting times for elective surgeries at public hospitals eg for orthopaedic surgery. One of the attractions of health insurance is the ability to bypass public hospital waiting lists and go through the private system.

Private hospitals are very expensive for treatment and hospitalisation. Your OSHC will cover some of the cost of some private hospitals but you will have to pay the difference.

Your health insurance (OSHC) covers the total cost of accommodation in a shared ward of a public hospital. It also pays for the 'schedule fee' for the doctor but you will have to pay the difference if the doctor's fee is higher than the 'schedule fee'.

See also: Public hospital waiting times.

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS (GPs)

In Australia you do not have to go to a hospital to see a doctor. You can see a doctor (also known as a GP – General Practitioner) in their private practice or medical centre, with part or the entire doctor's fee being covered by Medicare or OSHC. You must make an appointment to see a GP. It is important to note that some GP surgeries will request full payment from you at the time of consultation and you will need to present the receipt to claim the rebate back from your health cover provider.

MEDICAL SERVICES

WHAT DO I DO IF I'M SICK?

Choose a doctor from the list of medical facilities in this handbook or use the Yellow Pages and phone the GP's surgery or medical centre to make an appointment. If you have woken in the morning feeling unwell and would like to see a doctor that day, you will need to phone the doctor's surgery early in the morning (8:00am – 8:30am) for an appointment.



Please note however, that it may not be possible to get an appointment on the same day - you may have to wait one or two days before you can see a doctor (in some regional areas of Australia it may be a week or two before you can get an appointment).

SEEING A DOCTOR

When you attend your appointment, the doctor will ask you questions about your health and may give you a brief physical examination, such as checking your breathing, your throat, ears etc. The doctor will then give you some advice regarding management of your illness and may give you a prescription for some medication. If you have had or need to take time off studies, you will need to get a medical certificate from the doctor to provide to your education provider. If your illness is more serious or the doctor is unsure of a diagnosis, she or he may refer you for further tests eg: blood tests or x-rays, or to see a specialist, Doctor. It is important to note that if you are dissatisfied with the diagnosis or service of the Doctor you see, you have the right to obtain an opinion from another Doctor.

PUBLIC HOSPITAL WAITING TIMES

If you cannot get an appointment with a GP and want to go to a public hospital to see a doctor, you may find a public hospital which has a general practice clinic attached. If not, and you attend an emergency room to see a doctor, be prepared to wait a VERY long time. It is not uncommon to wait more than 3 hours, and at some hospitals you could wait as long as 5-6 hours to see a doctor. It is common practice for a doctor or a nurse to make an initial assessment of your condition when you first arrive to prioritise the emergencies in the hospital. You will be seen as soon as the most urgent patients have been attended to. It is also common to remain in the emergency room for some time after a doctor has attended to you before you are instructed you can leave. Emergency department rules may include keeping you a little longer to observe you and ensure that your condition does not change, and it is safe to send you home with the recommended treatment. It is the same for all patients – international students and Australian citizens alike.

PHARMACIES

GP surgeries do not have medications to dispense to you. You must take the prescription given to you by the doctor to a Pharmacy or Chemist to obtain the medication. You will need to provide the pharmacy with your OSHC card, your full name and address. You are able to walk in off the street to any pharmacy/chemist/drug store in Australia and will only have to wait a short while for your prescription medicine to be prepared.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

Medication prescribed by your doctor is not free. You must pay the pharmacy. If the cost is more than *AU\$30.70 you can claim the difference back from your OSHC provider. Many pharmacists will offer you the option of having a “generic” brand of medicine. If the prescription medicine the Doctor has prescribed is also made available by a company which produces generic brands at cheaper prices, this option will be offered to you. This is ONLY offered if the content of the medicine is exactly the same as that prescribed by your doctor. It will, however, assist you to pay less for your medicine.

(*limits apply)

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION

Pharmacies/chemists also provide a variety of over-the-counter medications useful for treating colds, headaches, allergies and the like which do not require a prescription. Ask the pharmacist on duty for advice regarding the best medication for your symptoms. Ensure that you advise the pharmacist of any other medications you may be taking.

DENTAL AND OPTICAL

Dental and optical health services are **not covered by your OSHC** unless you take out extra cover. If you need to see a dentist or optometrist, you will need to make an appointment (see Yellow Pages) and pay the full fee of this service.

INTERPRETER SERVICES

We are lucky in Australia to have a variety of healthcare professionals from many different cultural backgrounds, so you may be able to see a doctor who speaks your first language. However, if you are having difficulties communicating with your doctor, the [Translation and Interpreter Service \(TIS\)](#) can be used. Phone **131 450**.



GENERAL HEALTH

Maintaining good health is of vital importance when studying abroad.

While living in another environment is a good way to change a daily routine, it is important for students who are experiencing difficulties in their own country (relationship, health, emotional, substance abuse, etc.) not to expect a vacation from their problems.

Going abroad is not a “geographic cure” for concerns and problems at home (that is, thinking that you can solve your personal dilemmas by moving from one place to another). Sometimes students feel that a change of venue will help them to move past their current problems. However, living and studying in a foreign environment frequently creates unexpected physical and emotional stress, which can exacerbate otherwise mild disorders.

It is important that all students are able to adjust to potentially dramatic changes in climate, diet, living, and study conditions that may seriously disrupt accustomed patterns of behaviour. In particular, if students are concerned about their use of alcohol and other controlled drugs or if they have an emotional or physical health concern, they should address it honestly before making plans to travel and study abroad.

MENTAL HEALTH

TONIC PSYCHOLOGY

Phone **1300 668 256** or email admin@mindfitpsychology.net.

LIFELINE

Phone **13 11 14** to access 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. Visit the [Lifeline](http://lifeline.org.au) website to find out more.

BEYONDBLUE

Phone **1300 22 4636** to get 24-hour support for mental health issues including anxiety, depression and suicide. You can also get support through web chat, email and an online forum on the [beyondblue](http://beyondblue.org.au) website.

LIFELINE 24-HOUR COUNSELLING, ADVICE AND REFERRAL SERVICES

Phone: **131 114**

Website: lifeline.org.au

PHYSICAL HEALTH

A big part of staying healthy involves eating healthy foods and getting enough exercise for fitness and relaxation. Nutrition Australia provides some great information about healthy eating, exercise and lifestyle on its website at nutritionaustralia.org.

- ▶ **Exercise** – do at least 30mins of moderate exercise a day
- ▶ **Sleep** – get at least 8-9 hours of sleep a night
- ▶ **Nutrition** – keep a balanced diet remembering to eat lots of vegetables and fruit everyday
- ▶ **Binge drinking** – limit your consumption of alcohol and avoid binge drinking. Binge drinking describes the habit of drinking to excess when you do drink, with little or no understanding of your limits to accommodate the amount of alcohol in your blood.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Taking care of your sexual health means more than being free from sexually transmissible infections or diseases (STIs or STDs); it also means taking responsibility for your body, your health, your partner’s health and your decisions about sex. Talk freely to your partner to ensure you are both ready for sex. Always use condoms as condoms are the only form of contraception that protects against STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) and unplanned pregnancy. But girls should also consider a form of contraception to ensure safety against an unplanned pregnancy. If you have any sexual health concerns consult your GP.



Laws and Safety in Australia

OBEYING THE LAW

One of the reasons we have such a wonderful lifestyle in Australia is due to our representative democracy, the separation of powers, and our respect for the rule of law. We have a lot of laws in Australia and as a result, society runs smoothly.

In being granted a visa to study in Australia, you signed a document (Australian Values Statement Temporary) agreeing to respect Australian values and obey the laws of Australia for the duration of your stay. Failure to comply with the laws of this land (including State and Territory laws) could result in a fine or the cancellation of your visa and possible deportation back home. If you are convicted of a serious crime, it could result in imprisonment. Nobody wants this to happen!

Click [here](#) for a comprehensive outline of Australian law and the legal system.

LEGAL SERVICES AND ADVICE

If you do break the law, are arrested and need to attend a court appearance you will need legal representation to negotiate Australia's complex legal system.

CHILD PROTECTION LAWS

The Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a requirement for anyone who works or volunteers in child-related work in Victoria. It involves a National Police Check (criminal history record check) and a review of reportable workplace misconduct.

Results of a National Police Check can take up to 4 weeks to be received.

Further information can be found at workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au.

Jurisdiction: **Victoria**

Department of Community Services: dhhs.vic.gov.au/news-media/news/community-services

Legislation: [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005](#)

OTHER RELEVANT ACTS:

- ▶ [Children Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#) (VIC)
- ▶ [Family Law Act 1975](#) (Cth).

HOME SECURITY

House-break-ins is one of the most common crimes. Most house break-ins appear to be crimes of opportunity with entry gained through an open or unlocked window or door. Most intruders are looking for (and often find) a house left open or unlocked where they can get what they want with ease and make a quick getaway.

SOME GENERAL SECURITY TIPS:

- ▶ Your house number should be clearly visible from the street in case of an emergency.
- ▶ Keep your front door locked when you are at the back of the house.
- ▶ Do not leave messages on the front door. It lets people know you are not home.
- ▶ Avoid having parcels left on the doorstep.
- ▶ If you have to have something delivered while you are out have the neighbours collect it.
- ▶ When out, leave a radio or television on or a light in the evening to give the impression you are home.
- ▶ Keep cash and valuables out of sight.

Home Security is an issue for you to consider when you are deciding on a place to live. Windows and doors should preferably have security screens or locks; doors should have deadbolts, a security chain and a peep hole; and if the property has an alarm system – that would also make it an excellent choice.



CONTENTS INSURANCE

It is recommended that if you are in a rental property that you obtain Contents Insurance for your belongings. This is a form of house insurance that insures the contents of the house. Landlords will usually have House Insurance but your belongings will not be covered. Contents insurance will replace your belongings if your house is robbed and your belongings are damaged or stolen, or you have a house fire and your belongings are destroyed or damaged. This may cost you up to \$200 per year depending on the value of your belongings.

INTERNET SAFETY AND SECURITY

INTERNET ACCESS ON ARRIVAL

Internet cafes are located in most major cities or book a computer at a community library.

The internet has now become an essential business, social, entertainment and educational resource for most Australians. The increasing level of economic transactions on the internet is making it the focus of criminal activities. It is important that internet users protect themselves from falling prey to these activities. The following tips list some simple precautions you can take to minimise the chances of becoming a victim of online criminals.

- ▶ Install anti-virus and other security software, such as anti-spyware and anti-spam software. Use and update this software regularly.
- ▶ Regularly download and install the latest security patches for your computer software, including your web-browser. Use automatic software security updates where possible.
- ▶ Use a firewall and make sure it is turned on. Firewalls help prevent unauthorised access to, and communications from, your computer.
- ▶ Delete suspect emails immediately. Don't open these emails.
- ▶ Don't click on links in suspect emails. Visiting websites through clicking on links in suspect emails may result in malware (malicious software), such as a 'trojan', being downloaded to your computer. This is a commonly used and effective means of compromising your computer.
- ▶ Only open an attachment in an email where the sender and the contents of the attachment are known to you.
- ▶ Don't download files or applications from suspect websites. The file or application could be malware. Sometimes the malware may even be falsely represented as e-security software designed to protect you.
- ▶ Use long and random passwords for any application that provides access to your personal identity information, including logging onto your computer. Don't use dictionary words as a password. Ideally, the password should be eight or more characters in length. Change passwords regularly.
- ▶ Use a limited permission account for browsing the web, creating documents, reading email, and playing games. If your operating system allows you to create a limited permission account, this can prevent malicious code from being installed onto your computer. A 'limited permission' account is an account that does not have 'Administrator' status.

PERSONAL SAFETY

When you are out and about it is important to be alert and aware of your personal safety. If you are going out at night remember:

- ▶ Think ahead - consider how you are going to get home - what about pre-booking a taxi or arranging transport with a friend or family member?
- ▶ Never hitch-hike.
- ▶ Make sure that you stay with your party and that someone knows where you are at all times.
- ▶ Make sure you have enough money to get home or to phone.
- ▶ Keep away from trouble - if you see any trouble or suspect that it might be about to start - move away from the scene if you can. The best thing you can do is to alert the police and keep away.



- ▶ Walk purposely and try to appear confident. Be wary of casual requests from strangers, like someone asking for a cigarette or change - they could have ulterior motives.
- ▶ Try not to carry your wallet in your back trouser pocket where it is vulnerable and in clear view.

See also "Drink Spiking" under Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs.

If you are out and about:

- ▶ Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you, especially if you are alone or it is dark
- ▶ Whenever possible, travel with a friend or as part of a group
- ▶ Stay in well-lit areas as much as possible
- ▶ Walk confidently and at a steady pace
- ▶ Make eye contact with people when walking - let them know that you have noticed their presence
- ▶ Do not respond to conversation from strangers on the street or in a car - continue walking
- ▶ Be aware of your surroundings, and avoid using personal stereos or radios - you might not hear trouble approaching
- ▶ Always keep your briefcase or bag in view and close to your body
- ▶ Be discrete with your cash or mobile phones
- ▶ When going to your car or home, have your keys in your hand and easily accessible
- ▶ Consider carrying a personal attack alarm
- ▶ If you do not have a mobile phone, make sure that you have a phone card or change to make a phone call, but remember - emergency 000 calls are free of charge.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT SAFETY

Travelling on public transport should be a safe and comfortable experience. Numerous security measures have been adopted to maximise the safety of travellers including security officers, police, guards, help points, good lighting and security cameras. Most drivers also have two-way radios and can call for assistance.

Buses

- ▶ Waiting for a bus:
 - Avoid isolated bus stops
 - Stand away from the curb until the bus arrives
 - Don't open your purse or wallet while boarding the bus - have your money/pass already in hand
 - At night, wait in well-lit areas and near other people
 - Check timetables to avoid long waits.
- ▶ Riding on the bus:
 - Sit as close to the bus driver as possible
 - Stay alert and be aware of the people around you
 - If someone bothers you, change seats and tell the driver
 - Keep your purse/packages close by your side. Keep your wallet inside a front coat pocket
 - Check your purse/wallet if someone is jostling, crowding or pushing you
 - If you see any suspicious activity, inform the driver



TRAINS

Many of the same safety tips when travelling by bus apply for trains. In addition:

- ▶ Most suburban trains have security cameras installed or emergency alarms that will activate the camera
- ▶ Carriages nearest the drivers are always left open and lit
- ▶ Try not to become isolated. If you find yourself left in a carriage on your own or with only one other person you may feel more comfortable to move to another carriage with other people or closer to the driver.

TAXIS

Travelling by taxi is generally quite a safe method of public transport. To increase your confidence when travelling by taxi, consider the following suggestions:

- ▶ Phone for a taxi in preference to hailing one on the street. A record is kept by taxi companies of all bookings made.
- ▶ You are entitled to choose the taxi/taxi driver of your preference. If a driver makes you feel uncomfortable you are within your rights to select another taxi.
- ▶ Sit wherever you feel most comfortable. This may mean travelling in the back seat of the taxi.
- ▶ Specify to the driver the route you wish to take to reach your destination. Speak up if the driver takes a different route to the one you have specified or are familiar with.
- ▶ Take note of the Taxi Company and fleet number. This will help in identifying the taxi if required.
- ▶ If you are walking a friend to catch a taxi, consider letting the driver know that you have noted these details e.g., "Look after my friend, Mr/Ms Yellow Cab No.436".
- ▶ Stay alert to your surroundings and limit your conversation to general topics.
- ▶ If you don't want your home address known, stop a few houses away from your destination.
- ▶ If the driver harasses you when travelling in a taxi your options include:
 - Ask the driver to stop. You may choose to make up an excuse to do so
 - Leave the taxi when it stops at a traffic sign or lights
 - Call out to someone on the street to attract attention and seek assistance. This may also cause the driver to stop
 - Read out the fleet number and advise the driver you will report him/her if they don't stop.

ROAD RULES

If you are going to drive in Australia, no matter whether you are an experienced driver and have an international drivers' licence or not, **YOU MUST KNOW THE ROAD RULES** before you attempt to drive (even 10 metres)! Many lives are lost on Australian roads every year and international visitors are at high risk! If you come from a country where you drive on the opposite side of the road to Australia it is sometimes helpful to have a companion drive with you to ensure you both take note of traffic conditions and signs until you are more familiar with driving on the left side of the road. A handy tip is not to think of it as the other side of the road, but to think that the "white line" (or centre dividing line on the road) is on your side as the driver, just as it is in all countries. It is recommended that you take one or two driving lessons in Australia before you begin to drive here on your own.

OWNING A CAR

- ▶ Registration

Any motor vehicle you own must be registered before you drive it on the road. You must register it in your name and provide the State car registration board with your driver's licence details and your residential address in Australia.

- ▶ Insurance

It is recommended that you have car insurance if you own a car, this will protect you if you have an accident that is your fault as it will help pay for any damage you may have caused to your car or another car.

- ▶ Speed

There are very obvious reasons for having speeding and traffic rules. The risk of being involved in an accident increases with the speed a vehicle is being driven because there is less time to react, less control of the vehicle and



the distance needed to stop is longer. The higher the speed a vehicle is travelling when it hits a pedestrian, the greater the chance of a fatality occurring. Speed kills.

▶ Mobile Phones and Driving

The use of mobile phones when driving is dangerous, against the law if it's not hands-free, and potentially fatal. This applies to sending or receiving text messages as well as calls. Operating a mobile phone while driving makes you nine times more likely to be killed in a collision. Police actively target the use of mobile phones by motorists. Fines are considerable and demerit points penalties do apply. You should be aware of how to legally use a mobile phone while driving.

▶ Demerit Points Scheme

The Demerit Points Scheme is a national program that allocates penalty points (demerits) for a range of driving offences. The scheme is designed to encourage safe and responsible driving. Along with financial penalties, demerit points provide a strong incentive to drive within the law.

Different offences have a different number of demerit points. A complete list of all offences, demerit points and fines can be downloaded from the related links section.

▶ Licence Requirements

If you are an international visitor on a student visa and you hold a current overseas driver licence you do not have to obtain a Victorian drivers licence so long as:

- You remain a visitor
- Your overseas licence remains valid and current
- You have not been suspended or disqualified from driving in NSW or elsewhere
- You have not had your licence suspended or cancelled or your visiting driver privileges withdrawn
- Your licence must be either written in English or, if the licence is not in English, you must carry an authorised English translation.
- You must carry your licence from your home country, including an English translation if it is in a language other than English, with you when driving and you must be able to prove genuine visitor status to Victoria Police, if required. A visa and letter from an educational institution and a statement from a consulate or diplomatic office may be used to establish visitor status.

For further information please visit [VicRoads](#) or call on 13 11 71 between 8.00am-5.30pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am-12.30pm on Saturday (Melbourne time).

For **translation and interpreter services**, call 9280 0783 between 8.30am-5pm Monday to Friday.

In most States/Territories of Australia if you hold a current driver licence from another country, you are allowed to drive on your overseas licence as long as:

- You remain a temporary overseas visitor
- Your overseas licence remains current
- You have not been disqualified from driving in that State or elsewhere and
- You have not had your licence suspended or cancelled or your visiting driver privileges withdrawn.

Most overseas visitors are not required to obtain an Australian licence if you comply with these conditions and can continue to prove your genuine visitor status to State Police if required.

Note: If you are a licence holder from New Zealand, you must obtain an Australian driver licence within three months of residing in Australia or you must stop driving.

When driving in Victoria, you must carry your overseas driver licence. Your licence must be written in English or, if the licence is not in English, you must either carry an English translation or an International Driving Permit.

If you are a temporary overseas visitor and you wish to obtain an Australian licence seek advice from your local Police Station.



DRINKING ALCOHOL AND DRIVING

If you are going to drink alcohol, don't drive. If you are going to drive, don't drink alcohol.

Anything else is a risk, not only to you, but also to other motorists and pedestrians. Alcohol is involved in about one-third of all serious motor vehicle accidents. As the level of alcohol increases in your body, you have more risk of being involved in an accident. Driving with a blood-alcohol content above the legal limit is dangerous to others as well as yourself and severe legal penalties apply. If you are above the prescribed blood alcohol content level, as the level of alcohol in your body increases, so does the severity of your fine and/or jail term.

▶ Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Levels

The blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream. A BAC of 0.05 means you have 0.05 grams of alcohol in every 100ml of your blood. As the liver metabolises alcohol at around one standard drink per hour, the BAC level drops unless more alcohol is consumed. BAC is measured with a breathalyser, or by analysing a sample of blood.

▶ Legal BAC Limits

There are legal limits as to the BAC level permissible if you are driving:

Victoria has two blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limits: zero and under 0.05. The limit that applies to you depends on the category of your licence and the type of vehicle you are driving.

▶ Factors Affecting your BAC

The more you drink, the higher your BAC. But two people who drink the same amount might register quite different BACs. There are many factors that will affect this, including:

- **Body size:** A smaller person will have a higher BAC than a larger person because the alcohol is concentrated in a smaller body mass.
- **Empty stomach:** Someone with an empty stomach will reach a higher BAC sooner than someone who has just eaten a meal. Food in the stomach slows down the rate at which alcohol passes into the bloodstream.
- **Body fat:** People with a lot of body fat tend to have higher BACs because alcohol is not absorbed into fatty tissue, so alcohol is concentrated in a smaller body mass.
- **Women:** After drinking the same amount of alcohol, a woman will almost always have a higher BAC than a male.

Because of all these variable factors, counting the number of standard drinks you consume can only give a rough guide to your BAC. For more detailed information about alcohol and how it affects you, please see the [Australian Drug Foundation](#).

To stay below 0.05 BAC, drivers are advised to limit their drinking to:

- **For men:** No more than two standard drinks in the first hour and no more than one standard drink every hour after that.
- **For women:** No more than one standard drink in the first hour and no more than one every hour after that.

▶ Random Breath Testing (RBT)

Random breath testing of drivers for blood alcohol levels and drug use is common at any time of the day or night. Police officers have the right to stop any vehicle at any time and require the driver to supply samples for screening. Any person driving a motor vehicle is required by law to have less than a specified amount of alcohol in their blood. If a driver exceeds the level which applies to them the driver has committed an offence.

▶ Increased Risk of an Accident

It is safest not to drink alcohol at all if you are going to drive. The more alcohol you have in your body, the more risk you have of being involved in an accident.

- At 0.05% Blood Alcohol Content (BAC), your risk of being involved in a road accident is double that of a 0.00% reading.
- At 0.1% BAC your risk is more than seven times as high of being involved in a road accident, than at 0.00%.
- At 0.15% your risk increases to 25 times that of driving at 0.00%.



DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!!

ALCOHOL, SMOKING AND DRUGS

▶ Alcohol

Alcohol use is legal for people aged 18 years or over. There are laws governing how alcohol may be used in each State and Territory of Australia.

▶ Standard Drinks

The use of standard drinks can help people to monitor their alcohol consumption and exercise control over the amount they drink. Different types of alcoholic drinks contain different amounts of pure alcohol. A standard drink is defined as one that contains 10 grams of pure alcohol.

These are all equal to approximately one standard drink:

- A middy of beer (285ml) = a nip (30ml) of spirits = a small glass (100ml) of wine = a small glass (60ml) of fortified wine such as sherry.

Please keep in mind:

- Some hotels don't serve standard drinks - they might be bigger. Large wine glasses can hold two standard drinks - or even more!
- Drinks served at home often contain more alcohol than a standard drink.
- Cocktails can contain as many as five or six standard drinks, depending on the recipe.
- Pre-mixed bottled drinks often contain more alcohol than a standard drink.

▶ Smoking

Australian law makes it an offence to sell or supply tobacco products to a person under the age of 18 years. It is illegal for anyone under 18 to purchase tobacco products. There are also a number of laws regulating and restricting the advertising, promotion and packaging of tobacco products. Regulations have been introduced to restrict smoking in public areas such as shopping centres, hotels, restaurants and dining areas, and in some workplaces.

▶ Drugs

Each State and Territory has laws governing the manufacture, possession, distribution and use of drugs, both legal and illegal. Drug laws in Australia distinguish between those who use drugs and those who supply or traffic drugs. The Federal Customs Act covers the importing of drugs, while each State has laws governing the manufacture, possession, distribution and use of drugs, both legal and illegal.

▶ DANGER: Drink Spiking!

Whether you are drinking alcohol or not, keep your drink close to you and watch it at all times. Drink spiking (putting extra alcohol or other drugs into a person's drink without their knowledge) is an unfortunate risk to people who are out trying to have a good time. Drink spiking can happen to anyone: male or female, young or old whether they are drinking alcohol or not. Never accept an open container of drink if you did not see it being poured and if you suspect you or your friends have had a drink spiked, call 000 (zero zero zero) immediately to report it and get help.

HITCHHIKING

A person who waves at unknown drivers from the side of the road to request a ride with a driver further along the road is called a hitchhiker. Hitchhiking is illegal in Queensland and Victoria. Elsewhere in Australia it is illegal to hitchhike on motorways (where pedestrians are prohibited and where cars are not allowed to stop). Some travel companies promote hitchhiking as an inexpensive means of travelling around Australia.

HOWEVER: Many crimes have been committed against innocent hitchhikers including violent personal crimes and abductions. You do not know anything about the person whose car you get into.

Our advice to you is: DON'T HITCHHIKE! It simply is not worth the risk.



AVOIDING DANGEROUS AREAS AND ACTIVITIES

It is important to always be alert and aware of your surroundings and to avoid dangerous areas and activities, particularly at night.

A public place can vary through the course of the day. It may be used by different groups of people at different times. It may be busy at certain times and isolated at others. It may be different during the day than it is at night. These differences can have a very different impact on the way you feel when you are in them. For example:

The street outside a hotel in the morning is likely to be used by people going to and from work or shopping. At night however, the people most likely to be on the street are hotel patrons. Alcohol consumption has now become a factor in these places, and for many (particularly for women), some areas may become less safe.

A shopping mall during the day has lots of different people using it. Once it closes, it is often isolated and usually dark.

A school between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm is usually lively and active. After 5 pm or during school holidays however, it may be isolated or dominated by particular groups of people. Being in a place when it is busy is very different from when the place is isolated. There is often no reason to be afraid, but be alert, be aware, and be careful.

MAKING NEW FRIENDS

- ▶ It is important to always be alert and aware of your surroundings and to avoid dangerous areas and activities, particularly at night.
- ▶ A public place can vary through the course of the day. It may be used by different groups of people at different times. It may be busy at certain times and isolated at others. It may be different during the day than it is at night. These differences can have a very different impact on the way you feel when you are in them. For example:
- ▶ The street outside a hotel in the morning is likely to be used by people going to and from work or shopping. At night however, the people most likely to be on the street are hotel patrons. Alcohol consumption has now become a factor in these places, and for many (particularly for women), some areas may become less safe.
- ▶ A shopping mall during the day has lots of different people using it. Once it closes, it is often isolated and usually dark.
- ▶ A school between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm is usually lively and active. After 5 pm or during school holidays however, it may be isolated or dominated by particular groups of people. Being in a place when it is busy is very different from when the place is isolated. There is often no reason to be afraid, But – be alert, be aware, and be careful.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

- ▶ What do I do if I'm assaulted?

It is very difficult to tell someone that you have been sexually assaulted. It is important to remember that sexual assault is a serious crime and can happen to people regardless of their gender or sexuality. Your first point of contact should be the Police or your closest Sexual Assault Service.

- From a public phone or mobile phone, call the police on **000**.
- Do not wash, shower, change clothes or clean up in any way until after talking to the police and going to the hospital. You could destroy vital evidence.
- Don't drink alcohol or take tranquillisers or other drugs as you will have to give a clear account of what has happened
- Try to remember everything you can about your attacker.
- Remember, you are the victim. You have nothing to feel guilty or ashamed about. Police officers are aware that a person who has been assaulted, sexually or otherwise, is likely to be suffering from emotional shock. They will do all they can to make things as easy as possible for you. It is likely they will provide a female police officer for a female victim. If not, you have the right to request one. You can also ask the police to contact a friend, family member, interpreter or religious adviser to be in attendance with you when you are dealing with the circumstances surrounding the report of assault.



SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

▶ Schoolies' Week

If you are an international student attending high school in Australia you will hear a lot of talk about "Schoolies Week" which refers to the Australian tradition of high-school graduates (known as "Schoolies" or "Leavers") having week-long holidays following the end of their final exams in late November and early December.

Official schoolies events, which are drug and alcohol free, are held at many schoolies destinations, they include concerts, dances and parties. For all official events, attendees are required to be a registered schoolie and present schoolie ID on entry. This schoolies ID, which at some locations includes a photo, is given to schoolies upon registering, which requires the presentation of current school ID and incurs a small fee. At many destinations, the official events are held in fenced-off areas or in nightclubs to prevent the infiltration of toolies ("too old for schoolies", which are associated with the targeting of drunk teenagers for sex) and to maintain crowd control. Some events are free while others (often those held at nightclubs) incur an entry fee.

If you are a school leaver and choose to be a part of schoolies celebrations, here are some good safety tips to keep in mind:

- Celebrate but watch your friends.
- Stay with friends and don't take chances. Remember there is safety in numbers.
- Plan ahead with your friends. Work out how you will share costs and how you will look out for each other.
- Book your own accommodation - don't expect that you can just stay with friends.
- Know where you are staying and how to get there.
- Before you go out, have a plan for getting home and tell someone where you are going.
- Negotiate a designated driver at the beginning of the evening and support them in their decision not to drink. During the week, take turns to be the designated driver.
- Stay clear of a driver who has been drinking or using drugs.
- Ask an official volunteer to walk you home if you are alone — don't walk home at night alone.
- Always keep enough money for a phone call, taxi or public transport.
- Stranger danger still exists for adults — don't accept lifts from anyone you don't know, and don't stay at a stranger's place.
- Don't swim at night and don't swim at all if you are intoxicated or using drugs

HOME FIRE SAFETY

International students are increasingly appearing in statistics related to fire incidents and deaths in Australia. Sadly, most of these fires are preventable. You can take some simple steps to reduce the risk of fire in your accommodation.

Follow the fire safety tips below to help you reduce the chance of fire in your accommodation:

SMOKE ALARMS

When you are sleeping you cannot smell smoke. Smoke alarms save lives. They wake you and alert you to the danger from smoke and fire. You **MUST** have a smoke alarm where you live, it is the law. All homes must have a smoke alarm on each level. Landlords are legally responsible for installation of alarms in rental properties. Tenants are responsible for testing and maintaining alarms. If you live on campus there will be a smoke alarm in your room. If you live off campus in a house or flat there must be a smoke alarm outside your bedroom.

- ▶ Look after your smoke alarm, it can save your life.
- ▶ Test your smoke alarm monthly by pressing the test button.
- ▶ DON'T remove the battery
- ▶ DON'T take the smoke alarm down
- ▶ DON'T cover the smoke alarm
- ▶ Replace the battery in your smoke alarm yearly.
- ▶ Regularly vacuum over and around your smoke alarm to remove dust and debris to keep it clean.
- ▶ If there is no smoke alarm or it does not work, report it to your landlord.



ELECTRICITY

The safe use of electricity assists in preventing house fires.

Improper use of power boards and double adaptors can lead to fires. A double adaptor or a power board plugged into another double adaptor or power board creates a danger of overloading the system. For safety, use a single extension cord rather than joining shorter cords. Leaving an extension cord coiled while in use or placing a cord under floor coverings can cause overheating.

Keep appliances away from water. A hair dryer takes time to cool down. For safety, allow this to happen on an inflammable surface before storing it.

Computers, monitors and TVs can overheat and cause fires, even when not in use. They should be turned off after each session. Good air circulation is necessary around TVs and videos. TVs should be turned off at the set, not only with the remote control.

Light globes can become very hot. It is dangerous to cover a lamp with any type of fabric. To dim a lamp it is recommended that a lower wattage globe is used.

▶ Heaters

- It's nice to keep yourself warm in the cooler weather, but remember heaters are a major cause of house fires.
- Read and follow the operating instructions for your heater.
- All clothes and curtains should be at least one metre from the heater.
- Turn off all heaters before you leave your room or go to bed.
- Before you go to bed at night or leave your home, ensure heaters are turned off at their power source and fires are extinguished.

▶ Candles, oil burners and cigarettes

- Candles, oil burners and cigarettes can all be dangerous fire hazards.

▶ Do not smoke in bed

- Dampen cigarette butts before putting them in the rubbish.
- Make sure your candles are on properly designed candle holders.
- Don't leave your room when a candle or oil burner is alight.
- Don't go to sleep when a candle or oil burner is alight.
- Do not put candles or oil burners near windows; be careful, curtains can catch fire easily.

▶ Cooking

- Most house fires start in the kitchen.
- Prepare food only in the kitchen.
- Always stay in the kitchen while food is cooking.
- Hot oils and fats catch fire easily.
- DO NOT use water to put out an oil fire.
- Use a dry powder extinguisher, fire blanket or saucepan lid to extinguish, "If Safe To Do So".
- Turn off the cooking appliance before you leave the room or go to bed.

▶ Plan Your Escape in a Fire

- Get down on the floor. Crawl to the door.
- Get out of your room.
- Close the door. This prevents smoke and fire from spreading
- Alert others.
- When outside, stay out.
- Call **000**.

Cooking



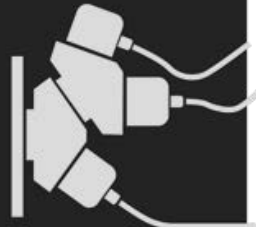
1 Number 1
cause of
home fires

Heating



2 Number 2
cause of
home fires

Electrical



3 Number 3
cause of
home fires

Cigarettes & Candles



4 Number 4
cause of
home fires



Adjusting to life in Australia

While living and studying abroad may be an exciting adventure, it can also present a range of challenges. Having decided to study and live in Australia you will be undertaking adjustments in many areas of your life including cultural, social and academic. It is also important to remember that while these changes are occurring you will be embarking upon a new semester of study (for many of you in a different language) and be away from your usual supports, networks and resources. Adjustment to a new country and culture is a process that occurs gradually and takes time. The values, beliefs, traditions and customs of your home country may vary greatly from those in Australia and adapting to the Australian way of life may take some time. This advice may help:

▶ Listen, observe and ask questions

Adjustment to a new culture and way of life takes time. Allow yourself time to observe those around you and patterns of both verbal and non-verbal communication. Don't be afraid to ask questions if there are things you do not understand as this will reduce the chance of confusion or misunderstandings.

▶ Become involved

Make an effort to meet people and become involved in groups both on campus and in the wider community. Maintain an attitude of openness to new situations and experiences. Establishing friendships and joining groups is the best way to experience and learn about Australian culture and will certainly mean you have a richer and more enjoyable time here.

▶ Try to maintain a sense of perspective

When confronted with difficulties, remind yourself that living and studying abroad is a challenge and it is normal to feel stressed, overwhelmed and out of your depth at times. Try to recall or make a list of the reasons you initially wanted to study abroad in the first place. Listing positive events or changes within yourself that have occurred since you arrived may also assist with getting things in perspective.

▶ Maintain some of the routines and rituals you may have had in your home country

This can include small things such as continuing to drink a certain type of coffee or tea or eating specific foods. It may also include maintaining involvement in bigger events such as celebrating a national day in your country of origin with a group of friends or finding a cultural group related to your home country for support.

▶ Keep in touch

Keep lines of communication open with those at home. Communicating with those at home regularly about your experiences of study and life in Australia, through emails, telephones and letters, is vital. Not only does it help to keep you connected with important social supports, it also assists your friends and family to understand your experiences which will smooth the transition when you return home.

▶ Sense of humour

Importantly, remember that living in a different culture means you will inevitably find yourself in a range of unusual and often confusing situations. Being able to laugh in these situations will remind you that it takes time to understand different cultures and that it is ok to make mistakes.

▶ Ask for help

Don't be afraid to ask for assistance or support if you need it. In addition to the Counselling Service there are many organisations set up on campus to ensure you have a successful and enjoyable time in Australia.

▶ Finally, relax and enjoy the journey!

Culture Shock

Culture shock is the feeling of being out of place in an unfamiliar environment. The initial excitement of moving to a new country often subsides when different cultural expectations challenge you to attend to daily responses and behaviours previously taken for granted. The potential stress of dealing with these persistent challenges can result in feelings of hostility and frustration with your host country as well as a profound longing for home.

OVERCOMING CULTURE SHOCK

Once you realise you have culture shock, getting over it and moving on to better adjustment with the host culture will depend on you. It is you who must take some positive steps to feel better, and the sooner you take them, the better!

▶ Recognition

First, you should remember that culture shock is a normal part of your adjustment and that you may have some of the symptoms. Some of your reactions may not be normal for you; you may be more emotional or more sensitive, or lose your sense of humour. Recognising your culture shock symptoms will help you learn about yourself as you work your way through it.

▶ Be objective

Second, try to analyse objectively the differences you are finding between your home and your host country. Look for the reasons your host country does things differently. Remember that host customs and norms are (mostly) logical to them, just as your customs and norms at home are logical to you!

▶ Set goals

Third, set some goals for yourself to redevelop your feeling of control in your life. These should be small tasks that you can accomplish each day. For example, if you do not feel like leaving your room, plan a short activity each day that will get you out. Go to a post office or store to buy something, ride a bus or go to a sports event. If you feel that language is your problem, set daily goals to learn more: study fifteen minutes a day; learn five new words a day; learn one new expression each day; watch a TV program in your new language for 30 minutes. Each goal that you achieve will give you more and more self-confidence that you can cope.

▶ Share your feelings

Fourth, find local friends who are sympathetic and understanding. Talk to them about your feelings and specific situations. They can help you understand ideas from their cultural point of view.





Australian Culture

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

▶ Greeting people

When meeting someone for the first time, it is usual to shake the person's right hand with your right hand. People who do not know each other generally do not kiss or hug when meeting. When you first meet someone, it is polite not to talk about personal matters.

Many Australians look at the eyes of the people they are talking with. They consider this a sign of respect, and an indication that they are listening. Do not stare at the person for a long time.

You can address a new acquaintance using their title and family name. You may use their first name when they ask you to or use it in the introduction. In the workplace and among friends, most Australians tend to be informal and call each other by their first names.

▶ Clothing Customs

The types of clothing that people wear reflect the diversity in our society just as much as the variation in climate. There are no laws or rules on clothing, but you must wear certain clothing for work situations. Most workplaces have dress standards.

Outside of the work situation, clothing is an individual choice; many people dress for comfort, for the social situation or the weather. Clubs, movie theatres and other places require patrons to be in neat, clean clothes and appropriate footwear.

Many Australians live close to the beach and the sea. On hot days, they may wear little clothing on the beach and surrounds. This does not mean that people who dress to go to the beach or swimming have low moral standards. It means that this is what we accept on and near our beaches.

People from other countries can choose to wear their national dress. They may be religious or customary items and include monks' robe, a burqa, a hijab or a turban. As a tolerant society with people from many different cultures, clothing is a part of cultural beliefs and practices that is encouraged.

▶ Polite Behaviour

'Please' and 'thank you' are words that are very helpful when dealing with other people and buying goods or services. When asked if you would like something, like a cup of tea, it is polite to say, 'Yes please', or just 'please' if you would like it, or 'no, thank you' if you do not. When you receive something, it is polite to thank the person by saying 'thank you'. Australians tend to think that people who do not say 'please' or 'thank you' are being rude. Using these words will help in building a good relationship.

Sometimes a sensitive issue may come up in conversation. Not to talk may seem rude. It is more polite to say 'sorry, it is too hard to explain' than to ignore a question.

Australians often say, 'Excuse me' to get a person's attention and 'sorry' if we bump into them. We also say, 'Excuse me' or 'pardon me' if we burp or belch in public or a person's home.

You should always try to be on time for meetings and other visits. If you realise you are going to be late, try to contact the person to let them know. This is very important for visits to professionals as you may be charged money for being late or if you miss the appointment without notifying them before the appointment time.

Most Australians blow their noses into a handkerchief or tissue, not onto the footpath. This is also true for spitting. Many people will also say, 'Bless you' when you sneeze. This phrase has no religious intent.

AUSTRALIAN SLANG

Much common word usage or 'slang' may seem strange to people new to Australia. Slang words start from many different sources. Some words are shortened versions of longer words. Many were expressions already used by migrants who came from the north of England. If you are unsure what an expression means, it is all right to ask the person who said it to explain. Some common expressions are:



| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Bring a plate | When you are invited to a party and asked to 'bring a plate', this means to bring a dish of food to share with your host and other guests. Take the food to the party in any type of dish, not just a plate, and it is usually ready to serve. This is common for communal gatherings such as for school, work or a club. If you are unsure what to bring, you can ask the host. |
| BYO | When an invitation to a party says 'BYO', this means 'bring your own' drink. If you do not drink alcohol, it is acceptable to bring juice, soft drink or soda, or water. Some restaurants are BYO. You can bring your own wine to these, although there is usually a charge for providing and cleaning glasses called 'corkage'. |
| Arvo | This is short for afternoon. 'Drop by this arvo,' means please come and visit this afternoon. |
| Fortnight | This term describes a period of two weeks. |
| Barbeque, BBQ, barbie | Outdoor cooking, usually of meat or seafood over a grill or hotplate using gas or coals. The host serves the meat with salads and bread rolls. It is common for a guest, when invited to a BBQ, to ask if they should bring anything. |
| Snag | The raw type of sausages are usually cooked at a BBQ. They can be made of pork, beef or chicken. |
| Chook | The term chook means a chicken, usually a hen. |
| Cuppa | A cup of tea or coffee 'Drop by this arvo for a cuppa' means please come and visit this afternoon for a cup of tea or coffee. |
| Loo or dunny | These are slang terms for toilet. If you are a guest in someone's house for the first time, it is usually polite to ask permission to use his or her toilet. 'May I use your toilet please?' Some people ask, 'Where's the loo?' |
| Fair dinkum | Honest, the truth. 'Fair dinkum?' when used as a question means, 'is it really true?' |
| To be crook | To be sick or ill. |
| Flat out | Busy. |
| Shout | To buy someone a drink. At a bar or a pub when a group of friends meet, it is usual for each person to 'shout a round', meaning buy everybody a drink. Each person takes a turn at buying a 'round'. It is also acceptable to say that you do not drink (alcohol) by saying that you are a 'teetotaller'. This also means you are not obliged to shout. |
| Bloke | A man. Sometimes if you ask for help, you may get an answer to 'see that bloke over there'. |
| How ya goin? | 'How are you going?' means how are you, or how do you do? It does not mean what form of transport you are taking. Sometimes it can sound like 'ow-ya- goin-mate'. |

RESPONDING TO AN INVITATION

► What could I be invited to?

If you get an invitation to lunch, dinner, barbeque, party, wedding, birthday, or any type of event you will usually respond with a letter or phone call. The midday meal is called lunch, and the evening meal is called dinner or 'tea'. 'Tea' can also mean a cup of tea or 'cuppa'. If invited for tea, the time of the event is a good sign of whether your host means dinner or just a cup of tea. An invitation to tea, for any time after 6pm (1800 hours) usually means dinner.

► How are invitations made?

Invitations can be written or spoken. Written ones usually ask for RSVP, (which is *repondez s'il vous plait* in French) and means please reply. You should reply whether you intend to go or not. The invitation will tell you how to reply and when the reply is expected. Your host may be specific about how many people are invited. If your host invites the whole family, you should tell your host how many people would go. Usually a family is the parents and their children.



▶ What if I do accept an invitation?

When you accept an invitation to a meal, it is also usual to tell the host what you cannot eat. It is perfectly okay to say that you are a vegetarian and do not eat meat or that you are Muslim or Jewish and do not eat pork. It is not polite to arrive late and you should make a telephone call to your host to explain if you are going to be late.

▶ What if I cannot accept an invitation?

You may not always be able to accept an invitation. The best way to refuse is to say, 'thank you, unfortunately I/we have other plans at that time'. To say that you are too busy may seem extremely rude, even if it is true. Once you accept an invitation, you should only cancel if something arises where you cannot go. You should also explain the reason to your host. To cancel because you got a better invitation from somewhere else can seem very rude, and can affect new friendships. Sometimes it is best not to accept an invitation right away and to ask your host whether they would mind if you check your plans and reply to them later.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

Australians hold certain days each year as special days of national meaning. We may recognise the day with a holiday for everyone or we can celebrate the day as a nation with special events. Most States and Territories observe some of the public holidays on the same date. They have others on different dates or have some days that only their State or Territory celebrates. In larger cities, most shops, restaurants and public transport continue to operate on public holidays. In smaller towns, most shops and restaurants close.

▶ New Year

Australians love to celebrate New Year. There are festivals, celebrations and parties all over the country to welcome in the New Year. Sydney Harbour and Sydney Harbour Bridge have become synonymous with New Year celebrations in Australia the fireworks display is considered to be one of the best in the world. January 1 is a public holiday.

▶ Australia Day

Australia Day, January 26, is the day we as a people and place celebrate our nationhood. The day is a public holiday. The day marks the founding of the first settlement in our nation by European people.

▶ Easter

Easter commemorates the resurrection (return to life) of Jesus Christ following his death by crucifixion. It is the most significant event of the Christian calendar.

In addition to its religious significance, Easter in Australia is enjoyed as a four-day holiday weekend starting on Good Friday and ending on Easter Monday. This extra-long weekend is an opportunity for Australians to take a mini-holiday, or get together with family and friends. Easter often coincides with school holidays, so many people with school aged children incorporate Easter into a longer family holiday. Easter is the busiest time for domestic air travel in Australia, and a very popular time for gatherings such as weddings and christenings.

▶ Easter Traditions

Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day: Shrove Tuesday is the last day before Lent. In earlier days there were many foods that observant Christians would not eat during Lent such as meat and fish, eggs, and milky foods. So that no food was wasted, families would have a feast on the shroving Tuesday, and eat up all the foods that wouldn't last the forty days of Lent without going off. Pancakes became associated with Shrove Tuesday because they were a dish that could use up perishable foodstuffs such as eggs, fats and milk, with just the addition of flour. Many Australian groups and communities make and share pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. Selling pancakes to raise money for charity is also a popular activity.

Hot Cross Buns: Hot cross buns are sweet, spiced buns made with dried fruit and leavened with yeast. A cross, the symbol of Christ, is placed on top of the buns, either with pastry or a simple mixture of flour and water. The buns are traditionally eaten on Good Friday; however in Australia they are available in bakeries and stores many weeks before Easter. A recent variation on the traditional fruit bun has become popular in Australia. A chocolate version is made with the same spiced mixture, but cocoa is added to the dough and chocolate chips replace the dried fruit.

Easter Eggs: Eggs, symbolising new life, have long been associated with the Easter festival. Chocolate Easter eggs are a favourite part of Easter in Australia. Some families and community groups organise Easter egg hunts for children

in parks and recreational areas. Easter eggs are traditionally eaten on Easter Sunday, however stores start stocking Easter treats well before the Easter holiday period.

The Easter Bunny: Early on Easter Sunday morning, the Easter Bunny ‘delivers’ chocolate Easter eggs to children in Australia, as he does in many parts of the world. The rabbit and the hare have long been associated with fertility, and have therefore been associated with spring and spring festivals. The rabbit as a symbol of Easter seems to have originated in Germany where it was first recorded in writings in the 16th century. The first edible Easter bunnies, made from sugared pastry, were made in Germany in the 19th century.

► Anzac Day

Anzac Day is observed on 25 April as the day the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed at Gallipoli in Turkey in 1915 during World War I. This day is set apart to hold dear the memory of those who fought for our nation and those who lost their life to war. The day is a public holiday. We remember with ceremonies, wreath laying and military parades. You will find that many towns have an ANZAC Day parade and ceremony culminating in the laying of memorial wreaths at a monument or war memorial. These services can be very moving and a wonderful way of experiencing some Australian National pride, as the memories of our fallen soldiers are commemorated.



Many Australians attend the National War Memorial in Canberra, or a war memorial in one of the Capital Cities around Australia for either the traditional “Dawn Service”, which commemorates the landing of the ANZACS at Gallipoli in the dark and dawning of that day, or another service usually commencing around mid-morning with a parade of returned armed forces representing all Australians who have fought in war. As Australia is such a multi-cultural country, these days it is common to see many other countries also represented in these parades. ANZAC Day is the only day of the year where it may also be possible to attend an RSL (Returned Servicemen’s League) Club to experience a traditional game of “TWO-UP”. A game of chance played by the ANZACS where money is waged on the toss of three coins for a resulting combination of 2 out of 3 being either heads or tails. RSL clubs are crammed with returned soldiers and their families and friends on this day. The atmosphere is one of “mate-ship” and friendliness to all and the experience of a game of two-up is a memorable one.

► Labour Day

Labour Day is celebrated on different dates throughout Australia. As elsewhere in the world, Labour Day originated in Australia as a means of giving ‘working people’ a day off and recognising the roots of trade unionist movements and workers’ rights.

► Queen’s Birthday

The Queen’s Birthday holiday celebrates the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II who is not only Queen of the United Kingdom but also Queen of Australia, where the Queen’s Birthday is a public holiday celebrated on a Monday but on different dates. Having the Queen’s Birthday on a Monday, results in a three-day long weekend.

► Melbourne Cup

The Melbourne Cup is a 2-mile international horse race run on the first Tuesday of November each year attracting the finest racehorses from around the world. Known as the “race that stops a Nation” due to a Public Holiday being declared in metropolitan Melbourne in its home State of Victoria, and most of the nation whether at work, school or home, stopping to watch the race broadcast on television. In other places, and mainly in the workplace, many people have a celebratory “Cup Day Breakfast”, lunch, party or barbeque to celebrate Melbourne Cup. It is traditional to run a “Cup Sweep” where everyone wagers an amount per horse to create a total prize pool. The names of the horses entering the race are drawn and matched randomly, one by one to the list of people wagering money. After the race is won, the prize pool is divided into amounts for 1st, 2nd, & 3rd, and usually a small amount for last place, or horses scratched due to injury just before the race. The Melbourne Cup forms part of the “Spring Racing Carnival” which attracts celebrities from around the world. Women dress in their best outfits; hats are definitely the order of any day,

gentlemen in suits of all sorts, and assorted other costumes. It's a very colourful time to be in Melbourne.

► Christmas

Christmas is celebrated in Australia on 25 December. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that Jesus is 'the son of God', the Messiah sent from Heaven to save the world.

The heat of early summer in Australia has an impact on the way that Australians celebrate Christmas and our English heritage also has an impact on some northern hemisphere Christmas traditions which are followed.

In the weeks leading up to Christmas houses are decorated; greetings cards sent out; carols sung; Christmas trees installed in homes, schools and public places; and children delight in anticipating a visit from Santa Claus. On Christmas Day family and friends gather to exchange gifts and enjoy special Christmas food. Australians are as likely to eat freshly caught seafood outdoors at a barbeque, as to have a traditional roast dinner around a dining table.

Many Australians spend Christmas out of doors, going to the beach for the day, or heading to camping grounds for a longer break over the Christmas holiday period. There are often places which have developed an international reputation for overseas visitors to spend Christmas Day in Australia. One such example is for visitors who are in Sydney at Christmas time to go to Bondi Beach where up to 40,000 people visit on Christmas Day.

Carols by Candlelight events have become a huge Christmas tradition in Australia. Carols by Candlelight events today range from huge gatherings, which are televised live throughout the country, to smaller local community and church events.

Christmas in Australia is also associated with two major sporting events: The Boxing Day Cricket Test on which opens on 26 December at the MCG (Melbourne Cricket Ground) and is usually sold out months in advance.

Also, the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race which is Australia's most prestigious yachting race and also begins on the 26th of December from Sydney Harbour.

The Outdoors

SUN SAFETY

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. In fact, one in every two Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer at some point during their lifetime. The good news is; it can be prevented. By minimising your exposure to the sun's damaging ultraviolet radiation (UVR), you can protect your skin and prevent the development of skin cancer.



SUN PROTECTION

Skin cancer and skin damage are caused by being exposed to the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation (UVR). The key to preventing skin cancer is to protect your skin from the sun by practising sun safe behaviours.

There are six simple steps you can follow to reduce your risk of skin cancer and protect your skin:

- Minimise your time in the sun between 10am and 3pm
- Seek shade
- Wear suitable clothing that provides good sun protection
- Choose a broad brim, legionnaire-style or bucket-style hat that will protect your face, neck and ears
- Wear UV protective sunglasses
- Apply SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before you go out into the sun.

BEACH SAFETY

Understanding the ocean is very important - the more you know about how waves, wind and tides affect conditions in the water, the better able you are to keep yourself safe, or even rescue others, from danger. Recognising danger signs and awareness of surf conditions is an essential part of lifesaving.

Remember the **F-L-A-G-S** and **Stay Safe**:

| | |
|----------|---|
| F | Find the flags and swim between them - the red and yellow flags mark the safest place to swim at the beach. |
| L | Look at the safety signs – they help you identify potential dangers and daily conditions at the beach. |
| A | Ask a surf lifesaver for some good advice - surf conditions can change quickly so talk to a surf lifesaver or lifeguard before entering the water. |
| G | Get a friend to swim with you – so you can look out for each other's safety and get help if needed. Children should always be supervised by an adult. |
| S | Stick your hand up for help – if you get into trouble in the water, stay calm, and raise your arm to signal for help. Float with a current or rip - don't try and swim against it. |

- ▶ And remember:
 - **Never** swim at unpatrolled beaches
 - **Never** swim at night
 - **Never** swim under the influence of alcohol
 - **Never** run and dive into the water
 - **Never** swim directly after a meal.





The Surf Environment

▶ Rips

A rip is a strong current running out to sea. Rips are the cause of most rescues performed at beaches. A rip usually occurs when a channel forms between the shore and a sandbar, and large waves have built up water which then returns to sea, causing a drag effect. The larger the surf the stronger the rip. Rips are dangerous as they can carry a weak or tired swimmer out into deep water.

▶ Identifying a Rip

The following features will alert you to the presence of a rip:

- darker colour, indicating deeper water
- murky brown water caused by sand stirred up off the bottom
- smoother surface with much smaller waves, alongside white water (broken waves)
- waves breaking further out to sea on both sides of the rip
- debris floating out to sea
- a rippled look, when the water around is generally calm.

SURF SKILLS

▶ Escaping from a Rip

If you are caught in a rip, remember the following.

Don't Panic - stay calm

If you are a strong swimmer, swim at a 45 degree angle across the rip and in the same direction as the current until you reach the breaking wave zone, then return to shore

If you are a weak or tired swimmer, float with the current, don't fight it. Swim parallel to the shore for about 30 - 40m until you reach the breaking wave zone, then swim back to shore or signal for help.

Remember to stay calm and conserve your energy.

▶ Negotiating the Surf

Before entering the surf, always make note of a landmark such as a building or headland that can be seen from the water and used as a guide for maintaining a fixed position.

Also check the depth of any gutter and the height of any sandbank before diving under waves – this will help prevent spinal injury.

When going out through the surf, negotiate the shallows by a high hurdle type of stride until the breakers reach your waist or until your progress is slowed.

Waves of any size and force should not be fought against and should be negotiated by diving underneath, giving you time to reach the bottom and lie as flat as possible on the sand while the wave passes over.

Your hands can be dug into the sand in front at arm's length for stability and as a pull forward when ready to surface.

If the water is deep enough, bring your knees up under your body so you can get a good push off the bottom, like an uncoiling spring. This gives added force to your next dive. Repeat this process until in chest-deep water, and then start swimming.

If a broken wave approaches when the water is not too deep, dive down and run or crawl along the bottom. In deep water, do not use extra energy trying to reach the bottom; instead duck dive to just below the turbulence. Wait for the wash to pass and then push or kick to the surface (off the bottom, if possible).

Stick to your predetermined path on the swim out.

Check your position by occasionally raising your head for a quick look when swimming on top of a swell.

If this all seems too hard to remember, look for a surf familiarisation course, or ask the surf lifesavers patrolling the beach for current local advice before entering the water.



Bush and Outback Safety

Australia has many extraordinary and beautiful places to explore. If you are going on a trip, travel with other people, make sure someone knows where you are at all times and stay on a road or a walking track.

IN THE BUSH

- ▶ Be prepared if you plan some time in our bushland. Plan your hike. Always tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to return. Let them know when you return safely.
- ▶ Check the weather forecast and be prepared for unexpected changes in weather.
- ▶ Check the length and degree of difficulty of your planned walk. Consider using a local guide when taking long or difficult walks.
- ▶ When walking or exploring outdoors drink plenty of water (allow at least one litre of water per hour of walking). Wear sturdy shoes and socks, a hat, sunscreen lotion, comfortable clothing and insect repellent. Other handy items for long bushwalks include food, warm clothing, first aid supplies, a torch and a map.
- ▶ Never walk alone. Read maps and signs carefully. Stay on the track and stay behind safety barriers.
- ▶ Never dive into a rock-pool, creek, lake or river. Stay away from cliff edges and waterfalls.
- ▶ Do not feed or play with native animals. You might get bitten or scratched.
- ▶ Limit your use of fire. Use a fuel stove for cooking and wear thermal clothing to keep warm. Never leave fires unattended or unconfined.
- ▶ Visit the ranger station or park information centre to obtain details on the best places to visit and any additional safety tips for that park.

ADVICE FOR MOTORISTS CAUGHT IN BUSH FIRES

- ▶ Bush fires are common occurrences in Australia during our often long hot summers. If you are in smoke and fire-affected areas, you should stay off the roads. If you must get in the car, put your headlights on, dress in protective clothing and footwear and make sure you take food and water - you could be stuck for long periods if your journey is blocked by road closures. Turn the car radio on and keep it tuned to local stations for bush fire updates.
- ▶ If you are caught in the middle of a bushfire, park the car immediately and remain calm
- ▶ Look for a clear area, preferably off the road. Areas clear of grass or bush are safest - they will not sustain fires of high intensity.
- ▶ Do not leave the vehicle. Many people have lost their lives by exiting the vehicle only to be trapped on foot in the open. Your vehicle will help protect you from radiant heat, the chief danger
- ▶ Switch the ignition off. It is unlikely that a vehicle's fuel tank will explode from the heat of a passing bush or grass fire
- ▶ Close all windows and vents or turn vents to recycle
- ▶ Put the headlights on so that the car is as visible as possible, especially to fire tankers
- ▶ Everyone must get down on the floor, below window height and cover all exposed skin with a wool or cotton blanket. Do not use synthetics, which may give off toxic vapours or melt
- ▶ Stay in the vehicle until the fire front has passed. Generally this will take between 30 seconds and one minute. During this time it will be hot, noisy and frightening. It will last a short time even though it may seem longer
- ▶ If you have water, drink it
- ▶ Never attempt to drive through smoke or flame. Crashes can occur when drivers run off the road, striking trees or other cars
- ▶ Once the fire front has passed, exit the vehicle and inspect it for damage before proceeding
- ▶ Do not proceed until you are satisfied that the fire has passed and that you are not likely to be trapped a second time
- ▶ Falling trees and branches are a hazard during and after intense fires. Do not park or drive under trees
- ▶ Exit the area as quickly as possible. Remember fire vehicles may be trying to enter the area and your presence may hinder fire-fighting operations.

IN THE OUTBACK

- ▶ Australia's outback is vast. Our remote wilderness areas have few towns and facilities, often with large distances between them, so be aware and plan your trip.
- ▶ When planning each day of travel, spend some time calculating how long it will take to drive between destinations. Be realistic about how far you can drive in a day.
- ▶ Inform family and friends or the local police of your travel plans. The local police can also provide helpful advice on facilities and road conditions.
- ▶ Always carry a current road map.
- ▶ Make sure your vehicle is in good working order and has been serviced recently.
- ▶ Use a four-wheel drive vehicle on unsealed roads in remote areas. Take extra care when driving these vehicles. For example, drive at reduced speeds on unsealed roads.
- ▶ Always carry a spare tyre, tools and water. If travelling to remote areas off major highways take extra food, water, fuel and tyres. Do not overload your vehicle and never carry spare fuel inside an enclosed vehicle.
- ▶ If you have trouble with your vehicle, don't leave your vehicle because it will provide you with shade and protection from the heat. Wait for help to come to you.
- ▶ Hire appropriate emergency communication equipment, such as a satellite phone or an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon device (EPIRB).
- ▶ Obey road closure signs and stay on recognised routes.
- ▶ Fires in desert and bush areas can spread very quickly. If required, be prepared to evacuate the area immediately.
- ▶ Australian wildlife and livestock often graze on the roadside and can stray onto the road. Be very careful when driving at sunrise, sunset and at night, when animals are most active. If an animal crosses in front of you brake gently, do not swerve wildly to avoid it.
- ▶ During daylight hours always drive with your headlights on low beam, as outback conditions can make it difficult to see oncoming vehicles.



Storm Safety

- ▶ Storms can happen anywhere and at any time of the year. Storms are more common during storm season – from October to the end of April, but it is important to be aware all year round.
- ▶ Severe storms can cause major damage. They may be accompanied by torrential rain, strong winds, large hailstones, loud thunder and lightning. Storms can cause flash flooding, unroof buildings, and damage trees and powerlines.
- ▶ You can also be indirectly affected by storms even if your property is not damaged, such as losing power, or access roads being cut.
- ▶ The SES is responsible for managing the clean-up and helping people during and after a storm.
- ▶ During a storm, there are some things you can do to stay safe:
 - Stay indoors and away from windows.
 - Unplug sensitive electrical devices like computers, televisions, and video recorders.
 - Listen to your radio for weather updates.
 - Don't use a landline telephone during an electrical storm.
- ▶ If you are caught outside during a storm:
 - Get inside a vehicle or building if possible.
 - If no shelter is available, crouch down, with your feet close together and head tucked in.
 - If in a group – spread out, keeping people several metres apart



Dangerous Animals and Plants

Australia is home to a variety of native animals. Even if they seem friendly to you, do not touch or feed them - they are not used to close contact with humans and may hurt you.

If you are visiting any of Australia's beautiful parks or forests:

Be wary of animals in their natural habitat. Stay well back from goannas, crocodiles, snakes, dingoes, cassowaries, and also wild pigs, cattle, horses and buffaloes. People have been seriously injured or killed by wild animals. Be very careful about approaching any injured animal, such as kangaroos or possums. They are likely to bite and scratch if you attempt to touch or move them.

Never feed or play with wildlife. Native animals are by nature timid, however, having been provided food from people, may become aggressive in pursuit of food. You may get bitten or scratched. In addition, human foods may be harmful to native animals.

In the warm waters of Tropical Queensland:

- ▶ Take care to avoid marine stingers
- ▶ Do not enter water where crocodiles may live.

BITES AND STINGS

The majority of insects in Australia are not harmful to humans. Some insects bite and sting if they are threatened so it is best to avoid touching them if you want to avoid being stung or bitten.

The Australia-wide **Poisons Information Centres** have a common telephone number: **131 126**.

Some people are allergic to certain insect bites or venom. In the case of an allergic reaction to bites or stings, medical attention should be sought immediately. Call a doctor or hospital for guidance, or 000.

ANAPHYLAXIS – ALLERGIC REACTIONS

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can occur in sensitive individuals from exposure to any chemicals foreign to the body, including bites and stings, plants, or medications. Parts of the body, for example the face or throat swell up so much that the patient can't breathe. In severe cases the patient may go into shock within a few minutes and the heart can stop. For any patient who shows signs of anaphylaxis, call 000 for an ambulance, and have the patient taken immediately to the emergency department of the nearest hospital.

GENERAL FIRST AID FOR BITES AND STINGS

- ▶ For bites or stings from these creatures seek first aid assistance straight away, stay calm, and as immobile as possible.
- ▶ all species of Australian snakes, including sea snakes
- ▶ funnel web spiders
- ▶ blue ringed octopus
- ▶ cone shell stings
- ▶ For all other bites and stings: Seek or apply basic first aid.
- ▶ Wash with soap and water and apply an antiseptic if available
- ▶ Ensure that the patient's tetanus vaccination is up to date
- ▶ Apply an ice-pack to reduce local pain and swelling
- ▶ Pain relief may be required eg. paracetamol or an antihistamine (to reduce swelling, redness and itch)
- ▶ The patient should seek medical advice if they develop any other symptoms or signs of infection.



Useful contacts

| | |
|---|---|
| Fire, ambulance and police emergency | Phone 000 or 112 (mobile only) |
| State Emergency Services (SES) | Emergency assistance with storm, flood or tsunami damage. 132 500 ses.vic.gov.au |
| ABC Emergency | List current alerts and warnings Australia wide – abc.net.au/news/emergency |
| After-hours medical services hotline (non-emergency) | 1800 022 222 healthdirect.gov.au/after-hours-gp-helpline |
| AGE Student Services | (03) 9822 3111 |
| AGE 24hr Critical Incident line | (03) 9822 3111 after office hours it diverts to an out of hours mobile |
| Translating and Interpreting Service | 131 450 tisonational.gov.au |
| Lifeline 24-hour Counselling, Advice and Referral Services | 131 114 lifeline.org.au |
| Police | 131 444 (non-emergency number) Crimestoppers: 1800 333 000 (crime tip line) |
| Doctors near campus | hotdoc.com.au/find/doctor/VIC/melbourne-3000 |
| Pharmacies near campus | healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services/results/melbourne-3004/tihcs-aht-12243/pharmacy?undefined&pageIndex=1&tab=SITE_VISIT |
| Dentist near campus | healthengine.com.au/appointments/dentist/VIC/Melbourne-3000 |
| Community health centres | betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/serviceprofiles/community-health-centres-service |
| Counsellors | Tonic Psychology 1300 668 256 tonicpsychology.com.au/telehealth admin@mindfitpsychology.net |
| | Lifeline 13 11 14 to access 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services or Lifeline website to find out more (lifeline.org.au). |
| | Beyondblue 1300 22 4636 for 24-hour support for mental health issues including anxiety, depression and suicide. You can also get support through web chat, email and an online forum on the beyondblue website (beyondblue.org.au). |



| | |
|--|---|
| Legal assistance | Victoria Legal Aid 1300 792 387 legalaid.vic.gov.au |
| | Consumer Affairs Victoria 1300 55 81 81 consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting/legal-and-dispute-support/resolving-disputes |
| Overseas Students Ombudsman | 1300 362 072 ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students |
| Other Ombudsmen <i>(Please note that you are required to go through the internal complaints resolution with the offending company prior to contacting the office of an Ombudsman).</i> | Commonwealth Ombudsman (complaints against federal government departments) – ombudsman.gov.au |
| | Victorian Ombudsman (complaints against Victorian state government departments) – ombudsman.vic.gov.au |
| | Australian Financial Complaints Authority (complaints against banks and lenders) – afca.org.au/about-afca/rules-and-guidelines/previous-edr-schemes |
| | Fair Work Ombudsman (complaints against employers) – fairwork.gov.au |
| | Private Health Insurance (Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman) (complaints against private Health Insurance companies) - ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/private-health-insurance |
| | Energy and Water Ombudsman (complaints regarding gas, water and electricity companies) – ewon.com.au |
| | Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (complaints regarding phone or internet services) – tio.com.au |
| Australian Competition and Consumer Commission | Advice on making a consumer complaint against businesses and alert authorities to potential scams – acc.gov.au/consumers/complaints-problems/make-a-consumer-complaint |
| Religious institutions near campus | Anglican melbourneanglican.org.au/find-a-church |
| | Buddhist mahamevnawamel-west.org.au |
| | Catholic melbournecatholic.org/directory/parishes |
| | Hindu myticketstoindia.com.au/blog/indian-temples-in-melbourne |
| | Islamic halaltrip.com/mosque-search |
| | Jewish melbournecitysynagogue.com |
| | Sikh singh.com.au/gurdwaras-in-melbourne-victoria-vic |



