



# AIPAH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

Version #2

2011

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## **Section 1: Welcome**

Important Information & Emergency Contacts

Things To Do

Before Leaving Home

Upon Arrival in Australia

## Important Information and Emergency Contacts:

### Education Provider Main

#### Contact Details:

Tel: +61 2 9637 0777

Fax: +61 2 9637 0222

Address: 31-33 Allen Street

Harris Park NSW 2150

[www.aipah.nsw.edu.au](http://www.aipah.nsw.edu.au)

### International Student Coordinator/Advisor

Jasmine Wong

email:

[international.services@aicm.edu.au](mailto:international.services@aicm.edu.au)

### International Student 24 Hour Emergency Contact

Ms MeeJa Yoo

Mob: 0411 246 686

### Emergency Telephone Numbers:

Police, Fire, Ambulance – 000

Department of Immigration and  
Citizenship (DIAC)

9 Wentworth Street  
Parramatta NSW 2150

#### Counter Hours:

9 am to 4 pm

Monday to Friday

**131 881**

### Medical Centres:

- Edinburgh Medical Centre  
81 Marion St, Harris Park  
Tel: 02 9635 7364
- Wigram St Family Medical  
Practice  
72 Wigram St, Harris Park  
Tel: 02 9633 4103
- Priority Medical Centre  
73, Marion St, Harris Park  
Tel: 02 9633 3744

### Transport:

Local transport information:

Tel: 131 500

[www.131500.com.au](http://www.131500.com.au)

[www.myzone.nsw.gov.au](http://www.myzone.nsw.gov.au)

#### Taxi companies:

Legion Cabs – 131 451

Silver Service – 133 100

Taxis Combined – 133 300

### Public Facilities:

#### Location of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs)

Cashcard ATM in Sweet Land  
Patisserie, 55 Wigram St, Harris  
Park

Major Banks ATMs in Parramatta  
City Centre

### Location of Public Telephones

- \* 24 Wigram St
- \* 1 Allen St
- \* 57 Marion St



### Post Office

Harris Park Post Office  
53a, Wigram Street  
Harris Park NSW 2150  
Tel: +61 2 9635 8440

## Things to Do:

### Before Leaving Home:

• Apply for passport	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Arrange student visa	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Arrange for immunisations and medication from my doctor	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Apply for a credit card and/or arrange sufficient funds	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Confirm overseas access to your funds with your bank	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Make travel arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Arrange travel insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Advise AIPAH of travel details	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Arrange accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Arrange transport from airport to accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Pack bags being sure to include the following:	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Name and contact details of an AIPAH representative	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Enough currency for taxis, buses, phone calls, etc. in the event of an emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Important documents:	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ <b>THIS HANDBOOK</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Passport	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Letter of Offer / eCoE	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Certified copies of qualifications & certificates	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Travel insurance policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ ID cards, drivers licence, birth certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>

NOTE: Make sure you leave any originals or copies of these documents safely with family in your home country in case of loss.

### Upon Arrival in Australia:

• Call home	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Settle into accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Contact AIPAH	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Purchase household items and food	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Attend international student orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Get student ID card	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Advise health insurance company of address & get card	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Open bank account	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Get textbooks	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Start classes	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Get involved in student life and associations (eg. music, sporting and cultural clubs).	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Section 2: Pre-Arrival

Introduction to Australia

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## Introducing Sydney

Sydney is the largest and oldest city in Australia and capital of New South Wales. Situated on what is considered to be one of the world's most beautiful natural harbours, Sydney is a vibrant, multi-faceted, cosmopolitan city that offers more entertainment, shopping and sightseeing than any other place in Australia. The harbour waterfront, with its famous Sydney Harbour Bridge and the iconic Opera House, is a place to go to meet people, eat good food, be entertained and simply enjoy watching all kinds of sailing craft pass by.

### Climate

Sydney is in a temperate region with typically four seasons; although not as clearly defined as those of the Northern Hemisphere. Summer temperatures range from 18°C to 32°C with humidity of 60 to 70 per cent (ideal beach weather). The winter is mild with temperatures dropping below 10°C overnight but warming up to near summer weather by midday. Rainfall in Sydney is usually spread fairly evenly through the year.



For the current weather conditions in Sydney, check:  
<http://weather.smh.com.au/>

## Seasons

Spring:	September to November	Spring in Sydney offers a pleasant mild temperature, with occasionally unpredictable cold, wet and windy days.
Summer:	December to February	Sydney enjoys a long summer with warm weather. The temperature ranges from 18°C to 32°C in summer, with occasional hot spells of over 38°C. Humidity in summer ranges from 60% to 70%.
Autumn:	March to May	Balmy weather with warm to mild temperatures
Winter:	June to August	Sydney has a short and mild winter. Winter temperature ranges from 8°C to 18°C, with the overnight temperature sometimes dropping below 6°C.

## About AIPAH

An exciting, innovative school for students with a passion for the creative and performing arts. Established in 2005, **The Australian International Performing Arts High School** is open to students of artistic ability, dedicated to nurturing talent and encouraging the highest quality in performance and academic excellence.

The school is a boutique institution, designed specifically to meet the needs of young people who, in addition to their academic studies, desire to focus on **Music, Drama, Dance** and/or **Visual Arts**. While there is a focus on the performing and creative arts, there is also emphasis on academic excellence.

AIPAH is an ideal institution through which to build a network of contacts in the creative arts. Outward looking and aware that the arts and entertainment industries turnover billions of dollars, AIPAH

brings to the students working professionals with the energy and vision to make projects happen.

Producers, directors, writers, film makers and performers are regularly invited to share their stories with the students, balancing inspiration with the awareness of the perspiration it takes to forge a career in the arts.

## **Arranging Visas:**

Most international students wanting to study in Australia require a student visa. Some other visa holders are also eligible to study as international students in Australia. Many students apply for a visa themselves on-line or via the Australian Diplomatic Mission in their country. The visa application process can be complicated and for students from some countries it may be better to submit an application with the assistance of an accredited agent due to their familiarity and experience in the field. You should check with the education provider in Australia for their accredited agents in your country.

In order to apply for a student visa you will need a valid passport, an electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE) and any other documentation required by the Australian diplomatic post with which you lodge your application. For example, if you are under 18 you must have a completed CAAW form to ensure your accommodation and welfare is approved by your education provider.

You must ensure to allow enough time for processing between lodging your application and the start of your academic program, as it can be a lengthy process depending on your country of origin.

### **Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)**

The Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Citizenship provides comprehensive information about student visa requirements and the application process, as well as application document checklists to assist you with your application.

Visit [www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm) for the latest information.

### **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)**

As well as links from the DIAC website the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website [www.dfat.gov.au/embassies](http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies) has a

comprehensive list of Australian embassies, high commissions, consulates and representative offices around the world.

### **Migration Agents**

A migration agent can assist you in submitting your visa application and communicate with DIAC 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: Although able to assist in completing education and visa applications, Education Agents are NOT licensed to provide migration advice.**

## **Visa Conditions**

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.

For a full list of mandatory and discretionary student visa conditions please visit

[www.immi.gov.au/students/visa-conditions-students](http://www.immi.gov.au/students/visa-conditions-students)

## 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 International Student Orientation to allow enough time for settling-in, adjusting to the climate and overcoming jet-lag.

You should fly into Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport which is the closest international airport to Sydney. Visit

[www.sydneyairport.com.au](http://www.sydneyairport.com.au). Harris Park is located 30kms from Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport – International Terminal.



## Documents

You should prepare a folder of official documents to bring with you to Australia, including:

- Valid passport with Student Visa
- Offer of a place / admission letter from AIPAH
- Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE) issued by AIPAH
- Receipts of payments (e.g. tuition fees, OSHC, bank statements etc.)
- Insurance policies
- Original or certified copies of your academic transcripts and qualifications
- Other personal identification documents, e.g. birth certificate, ID card, driver's licence
- Medical records and/or prescriptions
- CAAW if you are under 18 years of age.

If you are travelling with your family you will need to include their documents as well. Keep all documents in your carry-on luggage. In case you lose the originals, make copies that can be left behind with family and sent to you.

## 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 the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) homepage [www.aqis.gov.au](http://www.aqis.gov.au):

- Read "What can't I take into Australia?"
- And also let your family and friends know "What can't be mailed to Australia?"

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 items you might need to include (most can also be purchased in Australia)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> alarm clock                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> micro recorder for lectures        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bath towels, bed sheets, pillow cases | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spare spectacles or contact lenses |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> dictionary (bilingual)                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> your optical prescription          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> small sewing kit                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> photos of friends and family       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> music CDs or iPod                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> swimming costume                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sporting equipment                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> small gifts from home              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> toiletries                            |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> umbrella                              |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> scientific or graphics calculator     |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> camera                                |  |



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 & 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 [www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au) 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 fruit 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 about bringing in food, animals, plants, animal or plant materials or their derivatives visit [www.daffa.gov.au/aqis](http://www.daffa.gov.au/aqis).

### **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:

Visit [www.sydneyairport.com.au](http://www.sydneyairport.com.au) for further information about how to get to and from the airport.

### **Train**

There are rail stations located at both the International and Domestic Terminals.

The Domestic rail station is located directly between T2 and T3 Terminals and is accessible from within the terminals from the arrivals level.

The International rail station is located at the northern end of the terminal and is accessible from the arrivals level.

### **Travel to the City**

Airport Link is a fast and convenient way to reach the centre of Sydney. Trains run approximately every 10 minutes and the journey into the city takes only 13 minutes. The international and domestic rail stations link directly to the City Circle which means most city destinations are within a short walk of stations.

### **Travel to the Suburbs**

Tickets can be purchased to all Sydney stations from the International and Domestic rail stations. Simply catch the train from the International or Domestic stations to Central station and change for all suburban services.

### **Travel between Terminals**

Airport Link offers a \$5.00 (one way, per person) transfer ticket for passengers transferring between T1 International and T2/T3 Domestic Terminals. The journey takes only 2 minutes and there are frequent services between 5am and midnight, 7 days a week. For more information visit [www.airportlink.com.au](http://www.airportlink.com.au). For more information on fares, maps and travel planners visit the [Airport Link](http://www.airportlink.com.au) website or phone +61 2 8337 8417.

## **Public buses**

There are many bus services that operate to and from Sydney Airport - most of which require pre-booking. See the options below to determine which service best suits your needs.

### **Sydney buses**

Sydney Buses has a timetabled service between Bondi Junction and Burwood with stops at both T1 International and T3 Domestic Terminals. The timetable is available on [http://www.sydneybuses.info/uploads/File/pdfs/regular\\_timetable\\_s/400\\_410tt.pdf](http://www.sydneybuses.info/uploads/File/pdfs/regular_timetable_s/400_410tt.pdf), with a map available [http://www.sydneybuses.info/uploads/File/pdfs/regular\\_route\\_maps/400\\_410map.pdf](http://www.sydneybuses.info/uploads/File/pdfs/regular_route_maps/400_410map.pdf). Clearly marked bus stops are located on the arrivals level outside each of these terminals.

General Information about fares, timetables and connections to other parts of Sydney is available at [www.sydneybuses.info](http://www.sydneybuses.info).

## **Shuttle buses**

### **Hotel transfer - Airport hotels only**

Airport Hotels run Airport - Hotel - Airport, shuttle services at a minimal fee. Please check with your Hotel for timetable and costs.

### **Hotel transfer - Sydney CBD area**

When making your accommodation reservations, check to see if there is a complimentary pick up/drop off service being offered.

### **Drivers should not approach you!**

It is against the law for drivers or their agents to approach you or to solicit a fare from you. All limousine and shuttle bus services must be pre-arranged. Sydney Airport works closely with the Department of Transport and Infrastructure, to report someone for soliciting, please email [groundtransport@syd.com.au](mailto:groundtransport@syd.com.au).

## **Taxis**

Each terminal has its own sheltered taxi rank with supervisors on hand in peak hours to ensure a smooth flow of taxis for travellers.

Kerbside supervisors can also organise taxis with baby capsules, wheelchair access, 5 seaters, station wagons for lots of baggage, and maxi taxis for groups.

Here are some approximate return fares you can expect to pay to and from Sydney Airport. Remember passengers pay for any bridge or road tolls on top of the fare (these fares are in Australian dollars and are based on non-peak traffic conditions):

Return fare to Sydney Airport:

- Sydney City \$50
- North Sydney \$65
- Manly \$103
- Parramatta \$165
- Liverpool \$114
- Cronulla \$89

A \$3.00 airport toll is payable by all passengers taking a taxi from any of Sydney Airport's taxi ranks.

Contacts have been provided below if you would prefer to pre-book your taxi.

#### **Taxis Combined Services**

Phone: 133 300

Web: [www.taxiscombined.com.au](http://www.taxiscombined.com.au)

#### **Silver Service Fleet**

Phone: 133 100

Web: [www.silverservice.com.au](http://www.silverservice.com.au)

#### **RSL Ex-Servicemen's Cabs & Co-Op Members Ltd**

Phone: +61 2 9581 1111

Cabcharge Bookings: 131 581

### Legion Cabs

Phone: 131 451

Cabcharge Bookings: 131 271

Web: [www.legioncabs.com.au](http://www.legioncabs.com.au)

### Premier Cabs

Phone: 13 10 17

Web: [www.premiercabs.com.au](http://www.premiercabs.com.au)

### St George Cabs

Phone: 132 166

Web: [www.stgeorgecabs.com.au](http://www.stgeorgecabs.com.au)

### Taxi Tips

Drivers are required to accept all fares, big and small, from the airport. If you are only travelling a short distance, drivers can return back to their place in the queue after they have taken you to where you need to go. The kerbside management team will help you and your driver with this request.

Please note that taxis are not permitted to pick up passengers outside of the taxi ranks and the driver will be fined AUD \$5,000 for breaking the regulation.

### Taxi Feedback

If you have any suggestions, compliments or complaints about your driver or your taxi trip please:

- phone the Taxi Customer Feedback Management System on 1800 648 478
- or visit the [Transport Infoline taxi service feedback page](#) to submit comments online

You will need the number plate of the taxi, or the driver's number, the taxi network and the time and date of your journey.

## 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.

[Include a paragraph on when and how the student should contact your institution.]

## Accessing Money:

**You should read this section carefully, and discuss the issues raised in this section with the bank or financial institution in your home country before you leave. All banks operate differently and you should be aware of all fees, charges, ease of access to your funds, and safety of the way in which you will access those funds.**

### How Much to Bring

You will need to make sure you have enough funds to support you when you first arrive. It is recommended that you have approximately **AU\$1500 to AU\$2000** available for the first two to three weeks to pay for temporary accommodation and transport. You should bring most of this money as either **Traveller's Cheques** or on an international credit card. Traveller's cheques can be cashed at any bank or currency exchange in Australia.

Please note that it is **not safe to bring large sums of money** with you! Lost credit cards or traveller's cheques can be replaced, but very few travel insurance companies will replace lost or stolen cash. Do not ask someone you have just met to handle your cash for you or to take your cash to make payments for you. Not even someone

who may indicate they are studying at the same education institution.

## Currency Exchange

Only Australian currency can be used in Australia. If you have not brought some with you, you will need to do so as soon as possible after arrival. You can do this at the airport. Once you have arrived in Sydney, you can also change money at any bank or at currency exchanges that can be found throughout the terminals on both arrival and departure levels.

## Electronic Transfer

You can transfer money into Australia by **electronic telegraph** or **telegraphic transfer** at any time. This is a fast option and will take approximately **48 hours**, but the bank will charge a fee on every transaction.

## ATMs

Automatic Teller Machines are located everywhere (including at the airport) and you can immediately withdraw cash from your overseas bank account at **ATMs displaying the Cirrus Logo** (if your ATM card has international access). Check this with your financial institution before leaving home.



## Credit Cards

All major international credit cards are accepted in Australia but you must remember that **repayments** to many of these cards can only be made in the country where they were issued. Do not rely on being able to get a credit card once you arrive in Australia because this is very difficult due to credit and identification laws.

## Arranging Accommodation:

Unfortunately, AIPAH does not have boarding facilities. However, we do have a partnership agreement with a company that deals with finding accommodation for students called **Global Experience**.

Tel: 61 2 9948 3599, 61 2 9948 3588

Fax: 61 2 9948 3500

Email: [enquiry@globalexperience.com.au](mailto:enquiry@globalexperience.com.au)

Website: [www.globalexperience.com.au](http://www.globalexperience.com.au)

However, you can request for the application and booking forms for homestay and guardianship from our AIPAH Overseas Student Welfare Officer on +61 2 9637 0777 or email: [international.services@aicm.edu.au](mailto:international.services@aicm.edu.au).

## **Temporary Accommodation:**

### **Hotels, Motels & Backpackers**

Generally, the price you pay for accommodation will determine its quality. However, it can be expensive to stay in a good quality motel or hotel for a long period of time. Backpacker accommodation is relatively inexpensive but you may need to bring your own pillow and sleeping bag if you choose this option.

### **Staying With Friends or Family**

If you know someone in Australia, this is a great way to settle-in to life here. Your friends or family can provide advice, support and encouragement in your first days in Australia. However, if you are under the age of 18 you must obtain approval from your education provider first.

### Section 3: Settling – In

Living in Sydney	Health
Living Expenses	Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)
Summer Vacation Expenses	Types of Health Care
Part-Time and Vacation Work	Medical Services
Public Transport	Laws and Safety in Australia
Religion	Obeying the Law
Food and Shopping	Legal Services & Advice
Permanent Accommodation	Child Protection Laws
Choosing Where to Live	Home Security
Types of Accommodation	Internet Safety & Security
Homestay	Personal Safety
Rentals	Public Transport Safety
Where to Look for Accommodation	Road Rules
Where Can I Get Help? Services	Alcohol, Smoking & Drugs
Telephones	Making New Friends
Mobile Phones	Sexual Assault & What to do if I am Assaulted?
Computer & Internet Access	Social Activities
Australia Post	
Support Groups	
Yellow Pages	

## **Living Expenses**

AIPAH estimates that in 2011 a single international student will require AUD\$18,000 to \$20,000 per annum to cover living expenses for the year. The amount spent depends on requirements, budget and location. These estimates do not include the costs of large nonessential items such as expensive electrical equipment or a car.

In addition, new students should have at least AUD\$2,500 when they arrive in Sydney to cover the initial establishment expenses such as rental bond payment (security deposit); electricity, gas and telephone connection fees; and to purchase basic furniture and household items.

Note: All costs quoted are subject to inflation and currency fluctuations.

The current inflation rate in Australia is 2.5-3.5% per year.

## **Summer Vacation Expenses**

The summer vacation time (December to February) requires special financial planning. Expenses for this period must be carefully estimated and added to costs for the academic year in order to give a realistic total budget for the calendar year.

## **Part-Time and Vacation Work**

Under immigration regulations international students, after commencing their studies, are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during semester and full time during school vacations.

While some students are able to earn extra money from part-time and vacation work, availability of suitable jobs is not guaranteed. It is not advisable to plan your study budget expecting to find work for the maximum allowable hours.

There are many ways to find casual and part-time work – local newspapers, friends, etc.

### **Public Transport**

AIPAH is well served by public buses. A train station, approximately 5 minutes walk from AIPAH, can take you throughout much of the Sydney metropolitan area, NSW country. Bus services connect AIPAH with all the major transport hubs.

Unfortunately, international students in the state of New South Wales are not eligible for state-determined travel concessions as at March 2010.

### **Religion**

Australia is a secular state. People have freedom of religion and worship. While the main religion is Christianity, there are also large communities which follow Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Taoism and Hinduism.

### **Food and Shopping**

Sydney is renowned for the variety and quality of its food. In the suburbs surrounding AIPAH, there are many reasonably priced, good quality restaurants, cafés and shops selling food from all around the world. Halal meat is available at butcher shops in Parramatta which is the next suburb from Harris Park.

You can find food, clothing, pharmaceuticals, books and stationery in the shopping areas around AIPAH.

## Permanent Accommodation

### Choosing Where to Live

Most students want to live within walking distance of the campus but this is not always possible and is usually determined by availability and cost. Often it is more convenient and more cost-effective to live further from the campus but closer to shops and public transport.

### Types of Accommodation:

#### Homestay

Homestay can be used as temporary accommodation on arrival, allowing time to settle in and look for long-term accommodation, or as a long-term accommodation option. Contracts are usually on a monthly basis.

Unfortunately, AIPAH does not have boarding facilities. However, we do have a partnership agreement with a company that deals with finding accommodation for students called **Global Experience**.

Tel: 61 2 9948 3599, 61 2 9948 3588

Fax: 61 2 9948 3500

Email: [enquiry@globalexperience.com.au](mailto:enquiry@globalexperience.com.au)

Website: [www.globalexperience.com.au](http://www.globalexperience.com.au)

#### Rentals

Rental properties are available in suburbs around AIPAH. Rents vary according to the number of bedrooms, condition and location of the flat/apartment or house. Electricity, gas and telephone costs are additional. When renting a flat/apartment or house, it is usual to sign a six-month lease and pay rent in advance plus a refundable security deposit, called a 'bond'. Houses and flats/apartments are usually unfurnished. It is important to make allowances for

establishment costs including the purchase of furniture and equipment.

Sharing a house or flat/apartment will reduce the cost. Usually students have their own room and share the cost of rent and other expenses such as bond, electricity, gas, telephone with the other people living in the household. Buying food and cooking is done either individually or on a group basis. Per person rent in a shared household can vary from A\$140-A\$220 per week plus establishment costs. Accommodation may be cheaper in some suburbs further away from the AIPAH campus, but you need to consider travel time and transport costs.

A guide to cost of living in a shared housing situation:

<b>Guide to individual approximate costs involved in establishing a shared house</b>	<b>Studio AUD\$</b>	<b>1brm AUD\$</b>	<b>2brm AUD\$</b>	<b>3brm AUD\$</b>
Rent per person/week	240–290	110–170	120–190	110–180
Bond – one month rent in advance; refunded on leaving provided there is no damage	960–1160	440–680	480–760	440–720
2 weeks rent in advance	480–580	220–340	240–380	220–360
Electricity, gas (\$20) and telephone (\$50) connection fees	70	70	70	70
Electricity (\$120), gas (\$100) and telephone bonds (\$0-\$500)	720	720	720	720
Household items (furniture, linen, kitchen utensils)	600	600	600	600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,070– 3,420</b>	<b>2,160– 2,580</b>	<b>2,230– 2,720</b>	<b>2,160– 2,650</b>

## Where to Look for Accommodation:

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

- Newspaper classifieds
- Real Estate Agent windows & websites
- Local shopping centre noticeboards

- Online student accommodation services

## **Where Can I Get Help?**

NSW

The Tenants Union of NSW

<http://www.tenants.org.au/resources/>

## 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. (See also: Health – Emergencies)

#### 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 newsagencies, post offices and convenience stores.


## Making Phone Calls within Australia

- **To make international phone calls:**

☎ Dial – international access code (**0011**) + the country code + 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).  
See the example under Calling Australia from Overseas.)

- **To make domestic phone calls:**

☎ Dial – the area code + phone number

Area Code	States	
(02)	ACT, NSW	
(03)	VIC, TAS	
(07)	QLD	
(08)	SA, WA, NT	

Visit [www.whitepages.com.au](http://www.whitepages.com.au) and [www.yellowpages.com.au](http://www.yellowpages.com.au) 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 Sydney would be 2 instead of 02), and then dial the required number.

**Example: International access number +61 2 9999 3662**

## Mobile Phones

Before bringing your mobile phone to Australia check with the Australian Communications and Media Authority [www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au) 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. For a comparison of mobile phone plans in Australia see: <http://www.mobiles.com.au/mobile-phone-plans/>



(Source: on-line search)

## 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.

## **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.

### **Small Letters**

The cost of posting a small letter for distribution in Australia is an AU\$0.50 postage stamp which you affix to the envelope.

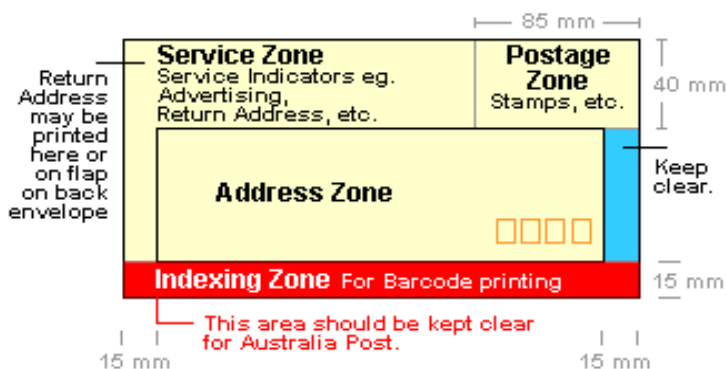
A small letter has the following characteristics:

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

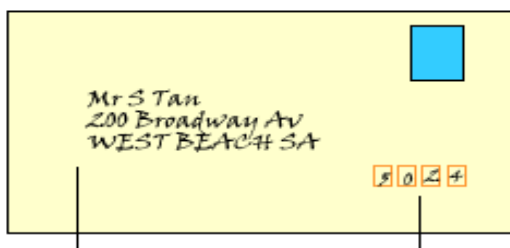
### **Envelope Layout**

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.

## Envelope Face Format - Allocation of Zones



### Typical Hand Addressed Envelope

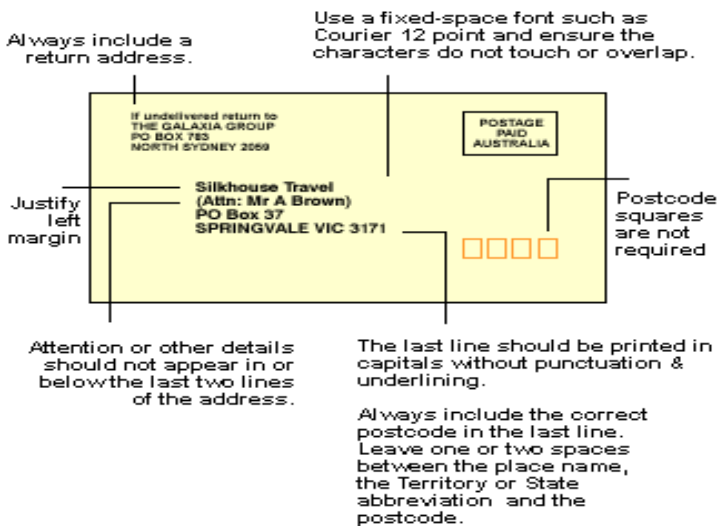


The bottom line should be in CAPITALS and include only the placename or post office of delivery and the State or Territory, in abbreviated form.

Write the destination postcode clearly in the four squares postcode squares.

Do not use the squares when addressing letters for overseas - even if the overseas postal code can fit in the squares.

## Typical Machine Addressed Envelope



[www.auspost.com.au](http://www.auspost.com.au)

(Source: Australia Post)

## Support Groups

### 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 timesaver 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

### 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 the local police station directly on: [\[Insert phone number of local police station\]](#).

#### 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, call **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 anytime, but will need to abide by the conditions of change of the health fund provider you are leaving.

## OSHC Providers

**Medibank Private:** [www.medibank.com.au](http://www.medibank.com.au)

**OSHC Worldcare:** [www.oshcworldcare.com.au](http://www.oshcworldcare.com.au)

**BUPA OSHC:** [www.overseasstudenthealth.com](http://www.overseasstudenthealth.com)

**Australian Health Management:** [www.ahm.com.au](http://www.ahm.com.au)

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:

[www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/privatehealth-consumersoverseascover.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/privatehealth-consumersoverseascover.htm)

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.

Medibank Private is the preferred private health fund for almost three million Australians. It is also the number one choice for international students for student health insurance. As Australia's leading private health fund, our staff are qualified to understand your needs and are committed to providing you with outstanding service and affordable OSHC.

For further information about what is covered by Medibank Private, click on this link: <http://www.medibank.com.au/Overseas-Students/About-OSHC.aspx>

### **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.

### **How do I make a claim?**

Claims can be lodged at any Medibank store or sent to Medibank by mail. Medibank Private need the following information to process a claim:

- A completed OSHC claim form;
- The original account(s);
- Receipts for paid accounts.

NB: Do **not** send your Membership Card when claiming by mail.

For further information on other claims information, click on this link: <http://www.medibank.com.au/Overseas-Students/About-OSHC.aspx>

### **Renewal information**

You can renew your Medibank Private OSHC online. However, if you don't know your membership expiry date, please call us on 132 331 (+61 3 8622 5780 outside Australia) to renew your OSHC.

When you renew your OSHC, this payment will cover the period from the date your membership is currently paid to.

For more information, please [email us](#) or phone us on 132 331 (+61 3 8622 5780 outside Australia), Monday to Friday, 8am - 8pm or on Saturday 8am - 4pm, Eastern Standard Time, Sydney, Australia.

For further information about renewing your Medibank Private OSHC membership, click on this link:

<http://www.medibank.com.au/Client/StaticPages/Join/OSHCRenewal/Quote.aspx>

## **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**, e.g. 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).

- If you are under 18, your International Student Advisor or homestay parent can help you find a doctor and accompany you to the 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.

## **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 the 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. For more information, visit [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au) or phone 131 450

## 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!

You can find a comprehensive outline of Australian law and the legal system at: [www.australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au).

### Legal Services & 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.

#### NSW Legal Aid

Legal Aid provides a range of services to people who need advice, assistance and representation, and who qualify for legal aid.

Visit [www.legaldid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legaldid.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 888 529 for further information.

## **Child Protection Laws**

In New South Wales, the Principal Act in force is the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW).

The objects of this Act are to provide:

- a) that children and young persons receive such care and protection as is necessary for their safety, welfare and well-being, having regard to the capacity of their parents or other persons responsible for them, and
- b) that all institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care and protection of children and young persons provide an environment for them that is free of violence and exploitation and provide services that foster their health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity, and
- c) that appropriate assistance is rendered to parents and other persons responsible for children and young persons in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities in order to promote a safe and nurturing environment.

## **Principles for administration of Act**

- 1) This Act is to be administered under the principle that, in any action or decision concerning a particular child or young person, the safety, welfare and well-being of the child or young person are paramount.
- 2) Subject to subsection (1), the other principles to be applied in the administration of this Act are as follows:
  - a) Wherever a child or young person is able to form his or her own views on a matter concerning his or her safety, welfare and well-being, he or she must be given an opportunity to express those views freely and those views are to be given due weight in accordance

with the developmental capacity of the child or young person and the circumstances.

- b) In all actions and decisions made under this Act (whether by legal or administrative process) that significantly affect a child or young person, account must be taken of the culture, disability, language, religion and sexuality of the child or young person and, if relevant, those with parental responsibility for the child or young person.
- c) In deciding what action it is necessary to take (whether by legal or administrative process) in order to protect a child or young person from harm, the course to be followed must be the least intrusive intervention in the life of the child or young person and his or her family that is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the child or young person from harm and promote the child's or young person's development.
- d) If a child or young person is temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or cannot be allowed to remain in that environment in his or her own best interests, the child or young person is entitled to special protection and assistance from the State, and his or her name, identity, language, cultural and religious ties should, as far as possible, be preserved.
- e) If a child or young person is placed in out-of-home care, arrangements should be made, in a timely manner, to ensure the provision of a safe, nurturing, stable and secure environment, recognising the child's or young person's circumstances and that, the younger the age of the child, the greater the need for early decisions to be made in relation to a permanent placement.
- f) If a child or young person is placed in out-of-home care, the child or young person is entitled to a safe,

nurturing, stable and secure environment. Unless it is contrary to his or her best interests, and taking into account the wishes of the child or young person, this will include the retention by the child or young person of relationships with people significant to the child or young person, including birth or adoptive parents, siblings, extended family, peers, family friends and community.

## Home Security

House-breaking 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 door step.
- 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 dead-bolts, 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 & 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.

1. Install anti-virus and other security software, such as anti-spyware and anti-spam software. Use and update this software regularly.
2. Regularly download and install the latest security patches for your computer software, including your web-browser. Use automatic software security updates where possible.

3. Use a firewall and make sure it is turned on. Firewalls help prevent unauthorised access to, and communications from, your computer.
4. Delete suspect emails immediately. Don't open these emails.
5. 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.
6. Only open an attachment to an email where the sender and the contents of the attachment are known to you.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.

*(Source: Australian Communications and Media Authority)*

## **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 & 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.

*(Source: Australian Federal Police)*

## 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 cameras
- 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

*(Source: Queensland Police Service)*

## 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 10metres)! 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**

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 NSW 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.

(Source: Roads and Traffic Authority, NSW)

## 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.

### **Drinking Limits Advice**

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 & DRIVE!**

*(Source: Australian Federal Police)*



## **Alcohol, Smoking, & Drugs**

### **Alcohol**

Alcohol use is legal for those 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.

*(Source: Australian Drug Foundation)*

## Making New Friends

There is no magic trick to making friends. And if you are in a foreign culture it can seem more difficult than usual to find people who you really "get along" with. **Be kind to yourself - remember that making friends takes time.** If you make the most of social opportunities during your life in Australia, just as you would back home, it will be quicker and easier for you to fit in, make friends and feel at home.

However you meet people, remember to be careful. When you meet someone new, be cautious until you get to know the person better and feel you can trust him or her. If a stranger starts talking to you, they are probably just being friendly. But be safe, and don't give them any of your personal details like your full name, your phone number or your address. With people you don't know well; always arrange to meet them in a public place, like a café or a park, instead of inviting them to your home or going to theirs, until you feel you have built a relationship with them, know more about them and feel comfortable with them.

Many international students spend time hanging out with other students and people from their own country and culture while they're in Australia. These people can make you feel accepted and you may be able to communicate much more easily with them than you can with the locals, particularly when you have just arrived. When everything around you is new and different, it can feel like a big relief to find people from your own country and cultural background. But remember, **you need to be careful at first**, until you get to know them better, just as you should with anyone else. Even though you may feel like you have a lot in common, **remain cautious until you feel you know them reasonably well and can trust them**. Many crimes against international students are committed by people from their own culture.

If you have any concerns or questions about someone you have met, or want to talk to someone about Australian mannerisms and communication "norms" (widely acceptable behaviour), make an appointment to talk it over with your **International Student Advisor**.

## **Sexual Assault**

Sexual assault is a criminal offence. It includes sexual harassment, unwanted touching, indecent assault and penetration of any kind. It is important to remember that it can happen to anyone and at any time but certain precautions may make it more difficult for a possible perpetrator:

- When socialising, be smart. Drink in a way that leaves you in control. Leaving drinks unattended leaves them open to being spiked quite easily.
- Walk with confidence and purpose.
- Avoid lonely or dark places.
- Be wary of strangers, whether they are on foot, in cars or at parties.
- Be aware of the people around you.
- Respect your intuition.
- If placed in a situation where you feel uncomfortable, say "No!" loudly and with conviction.

## **What do I do if I am 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.

1. From a public phone or mobile phone, ring the police on 000.
2. 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.
3. 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:**

### **What is 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.

**Stay with your friends and don't take chances.**

**Volunteers will be clearly identifiable and are there to assist you in a number of ways.**

**Look out for them**

**if you require assistance.**

- 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.

*(Source: Queensland Government Schoolies Week)*

## Section 4: Studying at AIPAH

To Begin:	Student Support Services
Arrive Early	Int'l Student Services – Key Personnel
What To Do First	Academic – Key Personnel
Int'l Student Orientation (Mandatory)	Campus Pastoral Care/Counselling
Int'l Student 'Code of Conduct'	Ancillary Student Services
Academic Policies & Procedures	International Student Support and Welfare Policy 2011
Complaints & Appeals	Accommodation & Welfare for U18s Policy 2011
Int'l Student Visa Conditions	Guardianship Policy 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Progress Policy</li> </ul>	Calendar of Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance Policy</li> </ul>	Subject Selection
Student Administration Information	Timetables
Paying Fees	Assessment & Reports
Enrolment	Library Services
ID Cards	Computer Labs
Refund & Cancellation Policy	Health & Safety on Campus
Textbooks	

## To Begin:

### Arrive Early

Australian education providers will provide an International Student Orientation before the commencement of classes. At AIPAH, this orientation is held jointly with the local students' 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 school 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 to attend orientation gives you the chance to;**

- See and talk to the most important people you will need to know at the school.
  - International Office staff and their duties
  - Course or Academic Advisor
  - Student Services staff
- Enrol early which will help you to get your student card early.
- Meet and get advice from your Academic Coordinator.
- Find your way around the campus
  - Computer rooms and facilities
  - Recreation and eating areas
  - 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.

### **What To Do First**

Report to the Front Reception Office.

### **International Student Orientation**

During orientation program you need to ensure your enrolment details and personal details are correct. You will receive all necessary information required during your study at AIPAH.

The orientation will begin at 10.00am in the Main Hall in the administration block.

Orientation will include:

- meeting staff
- receiving an orientation booklet
- receiving the school calendar
- working through the orientation booklet to explain the administrative and academic processes and policies at AIPAH
- explanation of the School and Higher School Certificates and requirements of the Board of Studies
- having a tour of the school
- receiving and explaining your timetable
- confirming your subject choice [ yr 11 only]
- receiving your text book lists and other study requirements
- discussions around
  - i. support services
  - ii. expectations of AIPAH from students

- iii. expectations of students from AIPAH
- question time

Your photo will also be taken on this day for your student identity card.

Please ensure that you bring a notebook/diary and pens and morning tea. There will not be an opportunity to purchase any food or drink during the morning.

Full school uniform is required to be worn on this day.

### **International Student 'Code of Conduct'**

You are obligated to adhere to the Code of Conduct spelt out in both your Application and your Acceptance Agreement.

### **Academic Progress Policy**

AIPAH will constantly review your academic progress and will advise you of any concerns regarding your progress. You are reminded that it is a requirement of the Australian Government that you attend all classes. AIPAH is obliged to notify the Government if you do not attend consistently and this may lead to the cancellation of your visa.

You are encouraged to contact your individual teacher or the Principal if you are having any difficulties with your study program.

Assessment occurs in a variety of ways throughout the year. Generally, assessment takes the form of assignments, essays, tutorial work, practical work and class participation. There may be formal written examinations at the end of each semester or at the end of the academic year.

Your teacher will provide you with detailed information on assessment requirements at the beginning of your course.

An attendance roll will be kept for each subject/class.

For further information about the monitoring guidelines, intervention strategies and appeals procedures, please refer to the **AIPAH Academic Progress Policy 2011** which can be found and downloaded from our AIPAH website (<http://www.aipah.nsw.edu.au/Pages/policies.html>).

## **Complaints & Appeals Policy**

Students who are concerned about a situation, a process, a person or people, a facility or a service of AIPAH are encouraged to attempt to resolve their concerns using this procedure.

Students can only submit a complaint on an individual basis via the appropriate channels.

Students must submit appeals addressing the grounds criteria and provide supporting documentation.

All complaints and appeals will be handled professionally and confidentially in order to achieve a satisfactory resolution with each complainant or appellant having an opportunity to formally present his or her case at minimal or no cost to him or herself.

Students will be provided with details of external authorities they may approach, if required

At any stage in the complaint or appeals process each party may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meeting.

A student's enrolment will be maintained throughout the duration of the complaint or appeal process.

The process commences within 10 working days of the formal lodgement of the complaint or appeal and supporting information and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable .

AIPAH will encourage the parties to approach a complaint or appeal with an open view and to attempt to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation with an informal approach. Where a complaint or appeal cannot be resolved through discussion and conciliation, we acknowledge the need for an appropriate external and independent agent to mediate between the parties.

Nothing in this procedure inhibits students' rights to pursue other legal remedies. Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to other legal remedies. Students wishing to take this course of action are advised to:-

- Contact a solicitor; or-
- Contact: Law Society of New South Wales, 170 Phillip St, Sydney NSW 2000 Tel 02 9926 0333 for a referral to a solicitor.

For further information about the complaints & appeals guidelines and procedures, please refer to the **AIPAH Complaints & Appeals Policy 2011** which can be found and downloaded from our AIPAH website (<http://www.aipah.nsw.edu.au/Pages/policies.html>).

### **International Student Visa Conditions**

For a full list of mandatory and discretionary student visa conditions, please visit [www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm)

### **Academic Progress**

Refer to clauses 5.10 and 5.14 of Conditions of Acceptance: Student's Responsibilities, as well as the **AIPAH Academic Progress Policy 2011** which can be found and downloaded from our AIPAH website (<http://www.aipah.nsw.edu.au/Pages/policies.html>).

AIPAH expects all students to complete all academic work to the best of their ability. Teachers provide assistance in helping students reach their potential and fulfil all Board of Studies requirements. Homework is set daily to consolidate the day's learning experience and is an essential basis of all good studies.

**School Diaries** - Students should carry with them at all times a diary to record homework and important schooling events. The diary is a means of communication between teachers, students and parents and parents should be sure to check this diary on a daily or weekly basis.

Academic reports are sent out each semester to ensure parents are aware of the academic progress of their child. Parent teacher interviews are also scheduled after these reports are sent out to allow further communication between teachers and parents.

If students fail to satisfactorily meet course standards then they may not proceed to the next level of study and may be required to [a] repeat the level of study or [b] be reported to DIAC for lack of academic progress. Refer to the Policy's Section 5 – Guidelines for Monitoring Progress - for further details.

### **Attendance**

Refer to clause 5.13 of Conditions of Acceptance: Student's Responsibilities, as well as the **AIPAH Attendance Policy International Students 2011** which can be found and downloaded from our AIPAH website (<http://www.aipah.nsw.edu.au/Pages/policies.html>).

You must maintain a minimum attendance of **80% in every subject**. If you are sick, you **MUST** get a doctor's certificate from a REGISTERED practitioner with a PROVIDER Number.

Letters and notes from traditional healers and/or natural medical practitioners are not accepted as proof of illness for the purpose of attendance.

You **MUST** hand in the original certificate to the Principal within on your return to school. A copy of the original certificate will be made and the date handed in also recorded. The original will be returned to you. Keep the original in case you need to show it to DIAC.

**You must keep your own record of any absences.** The school will not provide a list of days/periods absent for any student in order to prevent the abuse of such information. Students with poor attendance will be reported to DIAC. If you are away from school for more than 2 days you must contact the school and inform them of your situation. **[9637 0777]**

Note that attendance calculations are based on **Projected Attendance** for a term, not actual attendance. This is in accordance with DIAC regulations.

### **Late Policy**

Students are expected to arrive on time for all lessons and will receive and students with a pattern of lateness will be given detention to make up the missed time.

If you are late, please collect a 'Late Slip' from Reception prior to going to class. You will be required to hand in this late slip to your teacher as you enter the classroom. If you are late to any period you will be marked as 'pa' (partial absence) on the class roll

### **Leave Policy**

Leave may be applied for part or whole days where the student is involved in auditions, performance, family and religious commitments and unavoidable appointments. Applications for leave must be presented for approval by a member of Faculty before 9am on or before the day of leave is required. A reason must be given before leave is granted.

Application forms are available at Front Reception and must be signed by a parent/guardian before being submitted for approval.

### **Current Address Details**

Students on an International Student Visa no longer need to keep DIAC informed of their home address in Australia, as DIAC will check these details with your education provider if required.

Therefore you **MUST** maintain a current residential address on your student file **AT ALL TIMES**.

Kindly see Front Reception for a Change of Contact Details form which must be duly completed and submitted to Administration.

## **Student Administration Information:**

### **Paying Fees**

Refer to clauses 5.7, 5.10, 5.18, 5.19 and 5.20 of Conditions of Acceptance: Student's Responsibilities and Tuition Fees of your Acceptance Agreement.

### **Enrolment**

All students, be they local or nonlocal, must complete the AIPAH online application form which is located on the [www.aipah.nsw.edu.au](http://www.aipah.nsw.edu.au) website.

Entry criteria for AIPAH is based on:

1. Academic transcripts.
2. Audition for Music / Drama / Acting Students – play 2 contrasting pieces or excerpts within 20 minutes, plus bring along any certificates of achievements and/or prizes won.
3. Audition for Visual Arts Students – bring 2 pieces of own works of art and portfolio, plus bring along any certificates of achievement and/or prizes won.
4. Audition for Students without any previous training will be based on interview and aptitude assessment.

### **ID Cards**

Student ID Cards will be issued at the start of the term at a special session that is coordinated by the IT Department. Refer to Orientation Schedule for further information.

### **Refund & Cancellation Policy**

Refer to Section 6: Refund for International Student Policy and Procedure of your Acceptance Agreement.

### **Textbooks**

The textbook lists are distributed to new students at the time of acceptance of enrolment. For new students starting at AIPAH after the school year has begun, the list is given on their first day at school so that they can confirm with their respective teachers on the selected textbooks being used for that year.

### **Student Support Services:**

Kindly refer to the Emergency Contact List at the start of this Handbook for contact details.

The Overseas Students Office at AIPAH supports the social, academic and administrative needs of international students.

- The Principal, Overseas Student's Advisor and Student Services Welfare Coordinator monitors all aspects of student welfare, including academic progress and provides opportunities for international students to become active members of the school community.
- The Overseas Student's Advisor helps with visa, passport, guardian and health insurance matters.
- The Student Services Welfare Coordinator & Principal work closely with international students and their teachers in subject choice, career advice and university entrance.
- Parents receive regular reports on academic progress and other matters.
- Regular contact with student guardians is maintained as a three way process between AIPAH, Global Experience Pty Ltd and the guardians.

The detailed policy can be downloaded from our AIPAH website (<http://www.aipah.nsw.edu.au/Pages/policies.html>).

If you have a problem, please see somebody straight away as they can usually help you:

Whether your problem concerns academic, classroom, money, health or emotional issues there is always someone to talk to. If you are comfortable approaching your homeroom teacher, talk to them, alternatively you can talk to any of your teachers and/or the Principal, Debra Aarons.

If you have questions about tertiary study, make an appointment to talk to the Principal.

If you are an international student, have home stay or guardian problems, or have any enquiries regarding your enrolment at the school or your Overseas Student Health Cover, please speak to the Student Services Officer, Jasmine Clarke in the front office

For any queries regarding school payments, see Belinda Torpy at reception.

If you are unhappy about something or if you have a suggestion relating to the school, please complete a student feedback form and give to reception or the Principal.

## **Ancillary Student Services**

### **Accommodation & Welfare Policy for Under 18s**

Australian Government regulations (National Code 2007) require international students under the age of 18 to have confirmation of approved accommodation and welfare arrangements [CAAW] while they undertake study in Australia, before a visa is granted.

This Policy provides the guidelines for accommodation, support, monitoring and risk prevention for underage students.

All international students who are under 18 must have appropriate accommodation arrangements in place that meet AIPAH's criteria for approval and/or is deemed appropriate according to DIAC.

- 1.1. Private rental accommodation without care arrangements in place is not permitted.
- 1.2. Non-related accommodation providers and staff who work with students in the course of their duties will be required to obtain a WWCC or Background check (BC).
- 1.3. AIPAH's responsibility for underage students commences from the start date of the course and ceases when the student turns 18 years of age, completes the course, withdraws from the course, transfers to another provider or where AIPAH withdraws its CAAW.

## Policy

AIPAH has in place procedures to ensure the college is compliant with ESOS legislation and the National Code to:

- 2.1. Monitor and report underage international students where they are deemed to be in breach of their visa conditions;
- 2.2. Place students in appropriate accommodation and care arrangements;
- 2.3. Provide welfare support for underage students;
- 2.4. Ensure employees working with underage students have submitted a “Working with Children Check” or Police clearance, as required. (Refer to Child protection policy for more information)
- 2.5. Ongoing reviews of the suitability of accommodation and welfare to ensure continued compliance with the school’s requirements
- 2.6. In order to be granted a student visa students under 18 years of age must demonstrate to DIAC that they have parent or legal custodian approval to reside in Australia for the duration of the course in which they are enrolled, or until they become 18 years of age.

This may be:

- i. Living with a parent/ legal custodian (person who has legal custody of), or a relative (e.g. a brother, sister, aunt, uncle) who is of good character and who is over 21 years nominated by parents and approved by DIAC;
- ii. Living in Home stay accommodation arranged or approved by AIPAH;
- iii. Having a local carer nominated by parents and approved by AIPAH.

[A ‘suitable local carer’ is someone who is deemed suitable by the college, in most cases: over 21 years of age, of good character (submission of background check), responsible (“Appointment of

guardianship” form submitted) and approval from parents (“Acceptance of guardianship” declaration form submitted).

The detailed policy can be downloaded from our AIPAH website (<http://www.aipah.nsw.edu.au/Pages/policies.html>).

## **Guardianship Policy**

### **Obligations of guardianship**

Obligations of guardianship for international students.

Only a parent or person who has legal custody of the student can nominate a guardian for that student.

### **Eligibility**

The person accepting the role of guardianship is required to:

- Be over 21 years of age, be comfortable conversing in English and reside in Sydney, Australia whilst the student is at AIPAH.
- Provide evidence of police clearance from NSW Police.
- Must be of good character and have permission to reside in Australia until the student has completed their course
- Provide documentary evidence from the parent of the student of his/her guardianship by completing the *Appointment of Guardianship* form
- Provide a statement to AIPAH of his/her acceptance as guardian to the nominated student by completing the *Acceptance of Guardianship* form

### **General Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the guardian include:

- Regular contact with both the student and her parents
- Notifying AIPAH of student absences

- Acting on the parents' behalf in dealings with AIPAH
- Being readily available to discuss matters of concern
- Attending AIPAH functions and events that concern the student, such as information briefings, parent/teacher interviews or guardian meetings
- Being readily available to support the student when needed for example with health matters, medical emergencies, travel and accommodation arrangements during vacations
- Being actively involved in the wellbeing of the student through, for example, invitations to meals
- Showing an interest in, and monitoring the academic progress of the student
- Informing AIPAH of an appropriate guardian's proxy when the guardian is unavailable for any reason. If the guardian needs to leave Sydney for a short duration, i.e. four weeks or less, a 'proxy' guardian must be nominated. For absences longer than one month, a new guardian must be appointed.

A student's place at AIPAH is dependent on compliance with these terms and conditions.

The detailed policy can be downloaded from our AIPAH website (<http://www.aipah.nsw.edu.au/Pages/policies.html>).

## **Calendar of Events**

Students are expected to log into ePAL, AIPAH's online communication portal for students to check the various events planned for the term and school year.

Key events like Orientation, Start of Term, Major Performances, School Vacation periods are posted within the eCalendar.

## **Subject Selection**

Senior students receive a subject selection form in which they can make their choices from the list.. The completed form needs to be returned to the school on the due date stipulated on the form.

## **Timetables**

Any changes to timetables will be posted on the portal (see website details below) and an email will be sent through to you and your parents, and notified during homeroom.

## **Assessment & Reports**

Assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students' learning. The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on students' achievement and progress and set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning.

### **Plagiarism**

Work completed for assessment must be the students own original work and must show evidence of original thought, research and initiative.

Cheating and plagiarism can give rise to instant failure and the requirement to repeat a subject or unit in its entirety. In serious and habitual cases of plagiarism, a student may be suspended and even have his or her enrolment terminated as a result of academic misconduct.

You are strongly advised against sharing your assignments/ assessments or other course work with your fellow students as this may lead to plagiarism of your work.

For further information about the monitoring guidelines, intervention strategies and appeals procedures, please refer to the **AIPAH Academic Progress Policy 2011** which

can be found and downloaded from our AIPAH website (<http://www.aipah.nsw.edu.au/Pages/policies.html>).

## **Library Services**

As AIPAH does not have an onsite library, the school utilises the Parramatta City Library for the following services:

- Homework help.
- On-line Tutor Services from home.
- Database access from library and home.
- 20 item borrowing policy (more for institutional borrowers such as schools).
- Extensive HSC and JSC (Junior School Collection) curriculum based collection.
- Student workshops including HSC and NAPLAN
- School holiday activities.
- Catalogue availability on line and free reservation service.
- Large community languages section.

## Computer Lab

Rules for use of the computer lab:

### 1. General

All computer users (staff, students, and others) are expected to be responsible for their own behaviour on the computer system, including the Internet. Users are reminded that their actions can represent the entire school community. This includes materials they choose to access, language they use, ideas they express, and other actions which they take.

### 2. Uncertainty

If you are unsure of what to do, for instance in the case of an error message, a web site offer, a strange email, a hardware malfunction, etc., ***ask the IT Manager***. It is better to wait and ask, than to take an action which will endanger yourself, the computer, or the network.

### 3. Administrative

#### ○ No Noise

So that everyone can concentrate, noise must be kept to a minimum. Please do not let your phone ring, have conversations, or listen to music without headphones in the lab.

#### ○ No Access During Scheduled Classes

Students are not allowed in the computer lab when they have scheduled classes.

#### ○ Air Conditioning

Because the labs are air conditioned, doors and windows must be kept closed. This is also to prevent insects which can damage the computers.

- **Broken Equipment**  
Do *not* try to repair equipment yourself. If you encounter problems with equipment, you should report this to the IT Manager.
- **Cleanliness**  
Smoking, drinking, or eating are **NOT ALLOWED** in the lab.  
Please keep the lab neat; clean up any messes, use rubbish bins, and leave equipment and furniture properly arranged.

#### 4. **Inappropriate Content**

Controversial content (e.g. pornography) is not appropriate in an academic setting. Users should expect that their browsing history will be recorded, and might be examined by system administrators. For more details, see sections below on Web and E-Mail Usage.

#### 5. **Account Usage**

Each user must have his or her own account. Accounts are not to be shared. This is for accountability and security. You must log out when you leave.

Users should not access other people's files unless permission has been given by the file's owner.

Programs (e.g. Skype Chat) may **NOT** be downloaded and installed from the internet. If you are unsure whether a web page is downloading a program, please ask the IT Manager. This is for security and uniform lab maintenance.

Personal program files may NOT be installed. This is for licensing and security reasons.

Personal work files, such as documents, may be brought into the lab, but must be scanned for viruses prior to use, to prevent system infection. Ask the IT Manager for details.

Hacking (attempting to gain unauthorised access to secured content, violate system policies and/or permissions, virus creation or propagation, etc.) is prohibited.

## **6. Web Usage**

Computer users browsing the World Wide Web are expected to avoid offensive materials. Should any user encounter any such material accidentally, they should report the circumstances immediately to a teacher.

Users should expect that their browsing history will be recorded, and might be examined by system administrators.

Users should note that the internet is available to all kinds of people, and that there are many scams and otherwise illegal or immoral activities on the internet. They should be just as cautious of information on the internet as they would be of information heard in the street from someone they don't know.

Bandwidth is a limited resource. When throughput is slow, you may be asked to cease high-bandwidth activity (e.g. music downloading).

## **7. EMail Usage**

Computer users should realise that, in their on-line communications, their actions may be interpreted to represent the school community. Therefore, users should not to use any rude language, or communicate any offensive ideas.

Users should again note that the internet is available to all kinds of people, and there are many scams and otherwise illegal activity perpetrated through email. Email from unknown persons should be received very cautiously. You are cautioned against giving out your personal information (such as name, phone, address).

It is forbidden to forward chain letters/emails. These are defined as any e-mail which states that it should be forwarded to others. These especially include warnings of viruses, worms, security warnings, etc. Such warnings will be sent by system administrators only.

#### **8. Rules & Updates**

These rules may be updated from time to time. Updates will be posted in the computer lab and on the web site. Users are responsible for being familiar with all rules, including new rules.

#### **9. Common Sense**

Again, you are responsible for your own behaviour on the computer system. The above rules are not exhaustive, and even if a particular action is not listed above as prohibited, you must use your common sense - if it will reflect poorly on you or the school, if it will disturb others, or if it might damage computers or the network, **DO NOT DO IT.**

Violation of any of the above rules may cause for:

- ejection from the lab
- suspension of computer privileges
- reporting to the college administration
- monetary reimbursement for damages

## Health & Safety on Campus

### Lunch

- There is a new healthy menu in place for Arcadia lunch orders. There will be no more chips or soft drinks.
- The Coffee Man will **NOT** be selling caffeinated cold drinks (Coke, V, Mother, and the like) to AIPAH students.

### Safety

- New students are generally buddied up with an existing AIPAH student.
- Students are encouraged to walk in a group to the train stations for safety reasons.
- On trains, students are advised to sit close to the guard's compartment indicated with a blue light on the train.

## Section 5: Social & Cultural FAQs

Adjusting to Life in Australia

Culture Shock

Australian Culture

Public Holidays & Special Celebrations

New Year

Australia Day

Easter & Easter Traditions

Anzac Day

Labour Day

Queen's Birthday

Melbourne Cup Day

Christmas

Sun Safety

Beach Safety

Remember the F-L-A-G-S

Rips & Escaping from a Rip

Negotiating the Surf

Bush & Outback Safety

Storm Safety

Dangerous Animals & Plants

Bites & Stings

General First Aid for Bites & Stings

## 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 term 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 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.

Don't be afraid to ask for assistance or support if you need it.

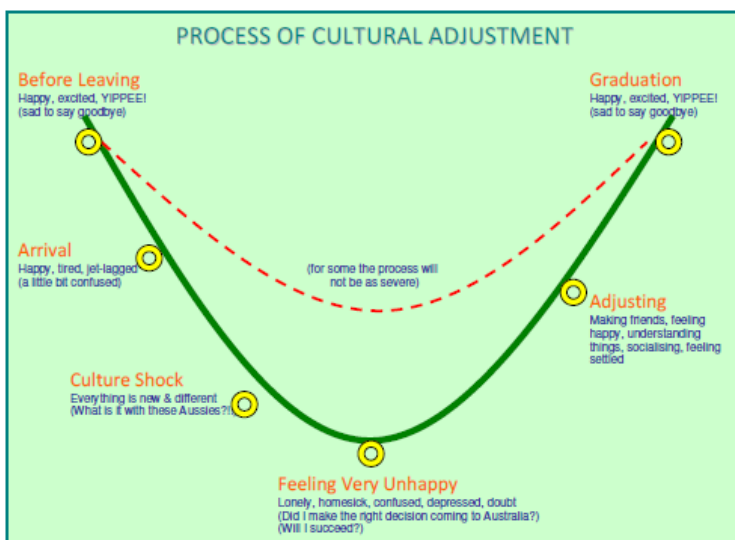
➤ **Finally, relax and enjoy the journey!**

*(Source: Macquarie University)*



## 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!

4. **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.

5. **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!

6. **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; 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.

7. **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.

*(Source: Rotary International Youth Exchange)*

## **Australian Culture:**

### **Social Customs**

#### **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. 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 sausages 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 'teetotaler'. 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-yagoin-mate'.

For more information on Australian slang visit:  
[www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/slang](http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/slang)

### **Tipping**

Tipping is not generally expected or practiced in Australia. This is because throughout Australia, service industry staff are covered by minimum wage laws and therefore do not rely on tips for their income. However, it is acceptable to leave a small amount (perhaps 10%) should you feel you have received exceptional service.

## Public Holidays & 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 on **April 25** the day the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed at Gallipoli in Turkey in 1915 during World War 1.

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 wagered 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.

## **Labor Day**

Labor Day is celebrated on different dates throughout Australia. As elsewhere in the world, Labor 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 Day

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.

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 Test:** December 26 is the opening day of the traditional 'Boxing Day Test' at the MCG (Melbourne Cricket Ground) between the Australian Cricket Team and an international touring side. It is the most anticipated cricket match each year in world cricket, and tickets are usually sold out months in advance.

- **The Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race:** the “Sydney-to-Hobart” is Australia’s most prestigious yachting race and on the calendar of international yacht racing, and begins 26 December in beautiful Sydney Harbour.

*(Source: Australian Government – Culture and Recreation Portal)*



## 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:

5. Minimise your time in the sun between 10am and 3pm
6. Seek shade
7. Wear suitable clothing that provides good sun protection
8. Choose a broad brim, legionnaire-style or bucket-style hat that will protect your face, neck and ears
9. Wear UV protective sunglasses
10. 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**

**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

### Escaping From a Rip

If you are caught in a rip:

- 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 duckdive 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.



*(Source: Surf Lifesaving Australia)*

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

## Bush & 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.

## 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 to calculate 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.

*(Source: Visit Victoria. com)*

## **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, un-roof 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 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 & 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.

[www.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre/bits\\_stings](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre/bits_stings)

*(Source Queensland Health)*

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