



PRE-DEPARTURE

HANDBOOK

2025

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Location and Contact Numbers

Prisma Education Institute Australia (PEIA)

Address: Unit 15C 342 Albany Highway, Victoria Park, WA, 6100

Phone: +61 0481 577 707

Email: studentservices@peia.edu.au

Web: www.peia.edu.au

Key Personnel

Chief Executive Officer:

ceo@peia.edu.au

Campus Manager/PEO:

peo@peia.edu.au
campusmngn@peia.edu.au

Marketing Manager:

marketingmngn@peia.edu.au

Academic Manager:

academicmngn@peia.edu.au

Student Services Officers

Supervisor, Student Services:

spvrss@peia.edu.au

Student Services Officers:

studentservices@peia.edu.au

Accounts Manager:

accounts@peia.edu.au

Administration Office Operating Hours

Office hours are from 8.00am – 5.00pm Mondays to Fridays.

Paying Fees

All fees are due before the commencement of each semester. If you are having difficulty with your fee payments, you must speak to the Supervisor, Student Services at Prisma Education Institute Australia (PEIA). In some circumstances, the Supervisor, Student Services will negotiate a suitable payment plan for you. If you fall behind with your fees, PEIA will report you to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) for non-payment of fees.

Orientation

Orientation is compulsory. You must attend the orientation before commencing your studies at PEIA. Its purpose is to inform you of important aspects of life at the Institute, and to provide an introduction to studying, transportation, and facilities. You will be introduced to the staff at PEIA and have a tour of the College. You will have an opportunity to ask questions during the orientation.

Students with Special Needs

In line with our Access and Equity practices, students with special needs are offered the same opportunities as any other candidate. Our training and assessment programs will take special needs into consideration. Flexible learning and assessment methods will be adapted according to your specific requirements if necessary.

Student Services

Student Services can assist with academic support. You may also request additional assistance from your Trainers or Academic Manager throughout your study. The Student Services Officer can advise students in all aspects of student life. The Student Services Officer is there to discuss and support students with issues including:

- Support in finding accommodation
- Learning pathways and possible RPL opportunities
- Provision for special learning needs
- Provision for special cultural and religious needs
- Provision for special dietary needs
- Any other issue.

Student Health

It is crucial that you be responsible for your health. Students unable to attend PEIA due to illness must advise the Student Services or their trainer immediately. A medical certificate must demonstrate proof of your illness. Medical certificates are to be handed into reception to prevent your attendance from being marked absent.

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 online 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 easier to use an accredited agent to assist you with your application.

To apply for a 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. The process of applying for a student visa can take a long time. To ensure you can study at the time you choose, you must allow time for the processing of your application.

International Student Visa Conditions

According to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), you must provide evidence that satisfies the assessment factors applicable to you to be granted a student visa. These include financial ability, English proficiency, likely compliance with the conditions of your visa, and any other matters considered relevant to assessing your application. Additional information on student visa issues is available on DHA website on www.homeaffairs.gov.au and the Study in Australia website: www.studyinaustralia.gov.au For a full list of **mandatory** and **discretionary** student visa conditions, please visit: <http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Trav/Stud>

You must follow all of the conditions of your visa. If you breach these conditions, DHA may cancel your visa.

Department of Home Affairs (DHA)

Australian Governments Department of Home Affairs provides comprehensive information about student visa requirements and the application process, as well as application document checklists to assist you with your application. You can find the latest information at www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website has a comprehensive list of Australian embassies, high commissions, consulates, and representative offices around the world.
<https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/our-locations/missions/Pages/our-embassies-and-consulates-overseas.aspx>

Migration Agents

A migration agent can assist you in submitting your visa application and communicate with the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) on your behalf. **You do not need to use a migration agent to lodge any type of visa application.**

Education Agents

Education agents promote various Australian education programs and institutions internationally. They 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; however, some agents do charge small amounts or offer additional paid services.

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.

Induction to Australia

Studying in Australia

In Australia, the education system is different from the training you may have experienced. The emphasis is placed on private (individual) study in the form of assignments, research, and analysing data to present arguments about the subject matter, and on being willing to defend one's argument. All these involve heavy use of libraries, intensive note-taking in lectures, and active participation in the learning process (as opposed to passive listening and remote learning).

To be a successful student in Australia, you will need to adapt to these methods of learning. PEIA will assist you to develop effective study skills. Many lecturers in Australia have vast experience teaching overseas students, they understand the difficulties in adjusting to different study methods, and they will be patient in helping you to develop new skills.

Useful links:

[Choose Australia](#)

[About Australia](#)

[Tourism Australia](#)

Perth

Western Australia's capital city of Perth is considered to be one of the most beautiful cities in Australia. Its natural parklands and beach lifestyle attract many thousands of visitors each year. The Swan River runs through Perth and provides excellent opportunities for water sports. Cycleways and footpaths alongside the river (and along the entire Perth Coast) offer a healthy lifestyle.

Within Perth city, there are free buses to the major tourist attractions such as the museums, galleries, and department stores. When you eat out in Perth it's likely that the produce was grown locally, and when combined with local wines and alfresco dining — well it's an experience all on its own of course, living in Perth will bring expenses. Obvious things that come to mind are accommodation, food, clothes, and childcare.

Western Australia is home to some of Australia's most spectacular scenery and environment, so come visit Perth and explore everything it has to offer. For further information, please visit:

<http://visitperth.com/>

<http://www.visitperth.com.au/>

<http://www.experienceperth.com/>

Staying in touch with home

There are costs associated with staying in touch with home. There are Internet cafes located throughout Perth, these cost around AU\$5.00 per hour. The cheapest way to phone overseas is using a phone card. Phone cards can be purchased at newsagents and convenience stores. Different phone cards will have different rates, so make sure different cards are compared to see which is the cheapest for your country.

Students requiring a mobile phone can get packages starting from around AU\$15.00 a month plus call costs for a two-year contract. You can also buy a pre-paid mobile phone for about AU\$100.00.

To post a letter overseas, the cost is between AU\$1.10 to AU\$2.60 through Australia Post. Parcels and freight are a lot more expensive, and the price will depend on how much you are sending and where it is going. For further information, please visit:

www.studyinaustralia.gov.au

<https://auspost.com.au/>

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.

Currency Exchange

Only Australian currency can be used in Australia. If you have not brought some with you, you can exchange money at the airport. Once you have arrived in Perth, you can also change money at any bank or currency exchanges:

Foreign Currency Exchange, Perth

Shop 24, London Court, Perth WA 6000

P: (08) 9325 7418

Nationwide Currency Services, Perth

215a Murray St Mall, Perth WA 6000

P: (08) 9324 3959

Interforex Pty Ltd, Fremantle

Cnr William & Adelaide St, Fremantle WA 6160

P: (08) 9431 7022

Arranging Travel

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

What to Bring

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 PEIA
- Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE) issued by PEIA
- 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 =D card Driver's license
- Medical records and prescriptions
- IELTS papers.

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.

Clothing

On most campuses, students usually dress informally. Jeans or slacks with t-shirts or blouses, sneakers or running shoes are an 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.

Sports coats or suits and ties for men and appropriate dresses for women are necessary for some functions such as formal dinners, graduation ceremonies, 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 what is included in the uniform package with your education provider.

Seasonal Considerations

Summer in Australia is from December through February, Autumn is from March through May, Winter is from June through August, and Spring from September through November. For most of the states, 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.

Other items you might need – they are all available in Australia:

- Alarm clock
- Bath towels, bed sheets, pillowcases
- Dictionary (bilingual)
- Small sewing kit
- Music CDs or iPod
- Sporting equipment
- Toiletries
- Umbrella
- Scientific or graphics calculator
- Camera
- Micro recorder for lectures
- Spare spectacles or contact lenses
- Your optical prescription
- Photos of friends and family
- Swimming costume
- Small gifts from home.

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.

Items owned and used for more than 12 months before 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 AUD 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.

Electrical Items

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

To satisfy the requirements of the Customs, 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 cash security to Australia Customs upon arrival.

If you are considering bringing a mobile phone, laptop, or any communication devices, we suggest that you visit the Australian Communications and Media Authority at <http://www.acma.gov.au> before making any purchases. Some students have brought in their 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** to function in Australia.

On Your Flight

Wear comfortable, layered clothing so that you can make adjustments according to the local weather. Remember: if you are flying from the Northern hemisphere winter into the Australian summer, it will be **very hot**, so wear lightweight 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 ü 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** that you do not carry large sums of cash, but instead 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. The dogs are used to screen 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 the food you have had in the bag previously. A quarantine officer may ask about the contents of your bag and check that you are not carrying items that present a quarantine risk to Australia.

Australian Customs and Quarantine

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 regardless** on the Incoming Passenger Card which you will receive on the plane. Students have received on the spot fines for not declaring items.

Read **What can't I take into Australia?**

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 airline before departure. International economy passengers are generally permitted 1 x checked luggage (35kg) and 1 x carry-on (7kg). Within Australia, you are typically allowed only 20kg of checked baggage. This will significantly limit the number of things you can bring, especially if you will fly within Australia to get to your final destination. 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.

Once you have your luggage, you will go through Customs. Be careful about what you bring to 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 severe 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 ten 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.daff.gov.au/aqis

Arrival Hall

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

Getting from the Airport

Airport Reception Service

PEIA can organize for you to be picked up from the Airport and taken to your accommodation. You need to let us know two weeks in advance if you would like this service. The cost of airport pickup is \$130 per person.

Public Buses

Perth

Perth has a free bus service that operates around the central business district. There are the CAT buses and the regular buses travelling through the city. Check the [free transit zone](#) (FTZ). There are three CAT routes: Red, Blue, and Yellow.

For more information, contact Trans Perth on 13 62 13 or visit www.transperth.wa.gov.au

Shuttle Buses

Perth

A shuttle bus service runs between the international and domestic terminals to the city Centre. The bus service stops at the major hotels in Perth CBD. For information on the Shuttle bus call 08 9277 7958, or visit www.perthshuttle.com.au

Taxis

Perth

Taxis are available from the ground floor level of Perth International Airport and the Perth Domestic Airport. The Domestic Airport is 11 kilometres from the city, and the trip takes approximately 20 minutes. The cost is roughly \$25 by taxi. The International Terminal is 17 kilometres from the city Centre, and it takes about 30 minutes to get there. The price is approximately \$35 by taxi. A \$2.00 taxi parking fee applies at the Perth International Airport. This \$2.00 per vehicle fee only applies to passengers leaving Perth International Airport from a taxi rank.

The Western Australian Government urges travellers to be aware of the unlicensed or illegal taxi and chauffeur drivers, also known as routers, operating at the Perth International Airport. If you are approached by someone offering to assist you with transport needs, you should decline the invitation and report the incident to the Department of Transport on 1300 660 147 or visit www.transport.wa.gov.au/taxis/

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 come to 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.

Bringing my Family

Most student visas allow you to bring your family members to Australia as your dependents (check your individual circumstances with the Department of Home Affairs See: *Arranging Visas*). Family members include your spouse, and you and your spouse's dependent children. Before bringing your spouse or children to Australia, you will have to prove that you can support them financially. The cost of supporting a family in Australia is very high. You may have to consider and discuss many issues with your family. Rather than bringing your family together with you to Australia, some students may find it useful to arrive first, settle into studies, find appropriate accommodation, adjust to living in Australia, and then arrange for their family to join them.

Before deciding to bring your family to Australia, it is essential to consider the following issues:

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

For more information visit: www.homeaffairs.gov.au

Child Care

Finding suitable childcare in Australia requires patience and planning. Waiting lists for places in most Childcare Centres are long. Many schools offer before- and after-school care programs (usually 7:30am-8:45am and 3:30pm-6:00pm). Children who need these programs must be registered with the school. The Childcare Centres around PEIA are:

Perth:

[Perth Long Day Care](#)

[West Perth Long Day Care](#)

[North Perth Long Day Care](#)

[East Perth Long Day Care](#)

[Leederville Long Day Care](#)

[Mount Lawley Long Day Care](#)

[Subiaco Long Day Care](#)

[Mount Hawthorn Long Day Care](#)

Schools

If you would like to bring your children to Australia with you, you must be aware of the following schooling issues: It is an immigration policy that school-age dependents of international students undertake formal schooling while they are in Australia. You will need to provisionally enrol your child in a school before you leave your home country, and you will generally have to pay the school fees one semester in advance. The school will issue an electronic Confirmation of Enrolment Form (eCoE) stating the program and its duration, so that you can obtain the appropriate visa for your child.

The Diplomatic Mission in your country can tell you which State schools are registered to take international students. Fees are payable by international students at all State schools unless you:

Receive sponsorship or scholarships from the Australian Government (e.g., the Australian Development Scholarship, IPRS);

Hold a higher institution or approved non-government scholarship. These scholarships must be approved by the State government for the dependents to be exempt from school fees.

You will be responsible for school fees and other costs including school uniforms, books, excursions, and stationery.

When choosing the most appropriate school for your child, it is best to ask questions about the school's curriculum, size, extra-curricular activities, and the size of individual classes.

You should also take into consideration the distance from the school to your **education institution**, the suburb in which you intend to live, and the method of transport you plan to use.

There are two types of schools in Australia – State schools and independent schools.

For further information, contact Department of Education, skills and employment, Western Australia: P (08) 9264 4111 or visit their website: www.dese.wa.edu.au.

Living in Australian

Adjusting to Life in Australia *(Source: Macquarie University)*

While living and studying abroad may be an exciting adventure, it can also present a range of challenges. Having decided to study and live in Australia, you will be undertaking adjustments in many areas of your life, including cultural, social, and academic. It is also important to remember that while these changes are occurring, you will be embarking upon a new semester of study (for many of you in a different language) and be away from your usual supports, networks, and resources. Adjustment to a new country and culture is a process that occurs gradually and takes time. The values, beliefs, traditions, and customs of your home country may vary significantly 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, and 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 more significant events, such as celebrating a national day in your country of origin with a group of friends.

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, but it also helps your friends and family to understand your experiences, which will smooth the transition when you return home.

Sense of humour

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

Ask for help

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

Finally, relax and enjoy the journey!

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Culture Shock *(Source: Rotary International Youth Exchange)*

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

Overcoming Culture Shock

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

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

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

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

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

Greeting People

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

Many Australians **look at the eyes of the people** when talking to them. They consider this a sign of respect, and an indication that they are listening. Do not stare at the person for a long time. You can address a new acquaintance using their title and family name. You may use their first name when they ask you to or use it in the introduction. In the workplace and among friends, most Australians tend to be informal and call each other by their first names.

Clothing Customs

The types of clothing that people wear reflect the diversity in our society just as much as the variation in climate. There are no laws or rules on clothing, but you must wear specific clothing for specific 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 seashores.

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 an important part of a tolerant society with people from many different cultures, clothing is one of the aspects of cultural beliefs and practices that are encouraged.

Polite Behaviour

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

Sometimes a sensitive issue may come up in conversation. Not to talk about it 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 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, soda, or water. Some restaurants are BYO. You can bring wine to these, although there is usually a charge for providing and cleaning glasses called 'corkage'
- **Arvo** - This is short for the 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
- **Ta** - This term is used as a shortened thank you
- **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 the 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 bathroom. '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-ya-goin-mate'. For more information on Australian slang visit: www.cultureandcreation.gov.au/articles/slang

Responding to an Invitation *(Source: Department of Home Affairs)*

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

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

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

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

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 the New Year. There are festivals, celebrations, and parties all over the country to welcome in the New Year. Sydney Harbor and Sydney Harbor Bridge have become synonymous with New Year celebrations in Australia, and 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 long 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 favourite 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, symbolizing 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 organize 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 lives to war. The day is a public holiday. We remember the soldiers with ceremonies, wreath laying, and military parades. You will find that many towns have an ANZAC Day parade and ceremony culminating in the laying of memorial wreaths at a monument or war memorial. These services can be very moving and a wonderful way of experiencing some Australian National pride, as the memories of our fallen soldiers are commemorated. Many Australians attend the National War Memorial in Canberra, or a War Memorial in one of the Capital Cities around Australia for either the traditional Dawn Service which commemorates the landing of the ANZACS at Gallipoli in the dark and dawning of that day, or another service usually commencing around mid-morning with a parade of returned armed forces representing all Australians who have fought in war. As Australia is such a multi-cultural country, these days it is common to see many other countries also represented in these parades.

ANZAC Day is the only day of the year where it may also be possible to attend an RSL (Returned Servicemen's League) Club to experience a traditional game of **"TWO-UP"**. A game of chance played by the ANZACS where money is waged on the toss of three coins for a resulting combination of 2 out of 3 being either heads or tails. RSL clubs are crammed with returned soldiers and their families and friends on this day, the atmosphere of the event is one of mate-ship and friendliness to all, and the experience of a game of two-up is a memorable one.

Labour Day

Labour Day is celebrated on different dates throughout Australia. As elsewhere in the world, Labour Day originated in Australia as a means of giving working people a day off and recognizing 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. Having the Queen's Birthday on a Monday results in a three-day long weekend.

Christmas

Christmas is celebrated in Australia on 25 December. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that Jesus is 'the son of God', the Messiah sent from Heaven to save the world. The heat of early summer in Australia has an impact on the way that Australians celebrate Christmas, and our English heritage also has an impact on some northern hemisphere Christmas traditions which are followed.

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, people decorate their houses, send greeting cards, and sing carols. Christmas trees are installed in homes, schools and public places; and children delight in anticipating a visit from Santa Claus.

On Christmas Day, family and friends gather to exchange gifts and enjoy special Christmas food. Australians are as likely to eat freshly caught seafood outdoors at a barbeque, as to have a traditional roast dinner around a dining table.

Many Australians spend Christmas outdoors, go to the beach for the day, or head to camping grounds for a long break over the Christmas holiday period. There are some 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, which is visited by over 40,000 people on Christmas Day.

Carols by Candlelight 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 activities.

Home Fire Safety

International students increasingly appear in statistics related to fire incidents and deaths in Australia. Most of these fires could have been prevented. You can take some simple steps to reduce the risk of fire in your accommodation.

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

Smoke Alarms

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

Look after your smoke alarm: it can save your life.

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

Electricity & Appliances

The safe use of electricity assists in preventing house fires.

Improper use of power boards and double adaptors can lead to fires.

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

Be careful to keep electrical appliances away from water.

A hair dryer takes time to cool down. For safety, allow this to happen on an inflammable surface before storing it. Appliances should be turned off after each session. Good air circulation is necessary around TVs and videos. TVs should be turned off at the set, not only with the remote control.

Light globes can become very hot.

It is dangerous to cover a lamp with any type of fabric. To dim a lamp, it is recommended that a lower wattage globe is used.

Heaters

It's nice to keep yourself warm in the cooler weather but remember: heaters are a major cause of house fires.

- Read and follow the operating instructions for your heater
- All clothes and curtains should be at least one meter from the heater
- Turn off all heaters before you leave your room or go to bed
- Before you go to bed at night or leave your home, ensure heaters are turned off at their power source and fires are extinguished.

Candles, Oil Burners and Cigarettes

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

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

Cooking

Most house fires start in the kitchen.

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

Fire (Source: Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Perth)

In a Fire:

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

Things to Keep in Mind When Renting

Security Deposits/Bond

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

Signing a Lease

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

Inspection

Inspection of Property

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

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

Inspecting a Potential Property

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

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

Utilities

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

Restrictions

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

Choosing a Roommate

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

Bills & Expenses

Do you and your roommates expect to share the costs of buying toilet paper, washing powder for clothes and dishes, cleaning supplies etc. used by everyone?

If you are answering an advertisement for a roommate; what does the rental price cover? Does it include utilities, or are they split equally when the accounts are due? Who will pay them and how will you all know they have been paid?

A small notebook that is signed by everyone who pays their share of the costs and by the person the money is given to is a good idea.

Kitchen Stoves & Ovens

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

Refrigerators

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

Cleaning

Disposal of Rubbish

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

Cleaning the Kitchen

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

Cleaning the Bathroom

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

Cleaning the Floors

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

Cleaning Products

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

Maintenance, Fixtures & Fittings

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

Smoke Alarms

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

ONLY WORKING SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES!

Once a month you should check the battery by pressing the test button on the smoke alarm. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle to press the test button.

Keep them clean. Dust and debris can interfere with their operation, so vacuum over and around your smoke alarm regularly.

Replace the batteries yearly. Pick a public holiday or your birthday and replace the batteries each year on that day.

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When the battery is low the smoke alarm will sound a short BEEP every minute or so. This is to alert you the battery is low and needs replacing.

Smoke alarms must never be painted.

If cooking and smoke sets off the alarm, do not disable it. Turn on the range fan, open a window or wave a towel near the alarm.

Do not remove the batteries from your smoke alarm or cover your smoke alarm to prevent it from operating.

Where Can I Get Help?

Department of Consumer Affairs WA: www.commerce.wa.gov.au

Services

Telephones

Public Telephones

Australia has a network of Public Phones throughout the country. They are easily recognised 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. Check the costs before calling.

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

Making Phone Calls within Australia

To make international phone calls:

Dial – international access code (0011) + 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)

To make domestic phone calls:

Dial – the area code + phone number.

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

For directories of residential, commercial and government phone numbers in Australia; and for a list of country codes and area codes for international calls, visit www.whitepages.com.au or www.yellowpages.com.au

Mobile/Cell Phones

Before bringing your mobile phone to Australia, check to see if your phone will be compatible to 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 that 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/>

Computer & Internet Access

Many of the above companies will also provide you with Internet access. 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 such as Telstra and Optus, you could get a packaged deal for your home phone, Internet and mobile phone. Students can access computer and Internet facilities from within the PEIA campus.

Australia Post

Australia Post is the largest communications, logistics, and distribution business. It 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 AU\$0.55. You use a **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 consistently. That is why it is necessary to address your mail clearly and correctly. The information on the picture demonstrates how. www.auspost.com.au

Getting Around

With one of the highest standards of living in the world, Australia offers modern transport systems. Australia has an extensive public transport system that includes trains, buses, two major national airlines, and some regional airlines. Metropolitan areas are divided into zones, and your ticket type and cost depend on which zone you are going to travel in and for how long. Tickets can be bought at train stations, on buses, and at news agencies.

Tourist students may drive in Australia on a valid overseas driver's license, but if the document is not in the English language, the visitor must carry a translation with the permit. An international driving license is not sufficient by itself.

Metered taxicabs operate in all major cities and towns. You will find taxi ranks at transport terminals, main hotels or shopping centres, or you can hail taxis in the street. A light and sign on the roof indicate if a cab is vacant. There is a minimum charge on hiring, and then a charge per kilometre travelled. Taxi drivers do not have to be tipped.

Public Transport

Perth

To find information about public transport visit: www.transperth.wa.gov.au P: 13 62 13

Taxis

Perth

Swan Taxis P: 131330

Black & White Taxis P: 131008

Driving

Perth

Please visit here, to know about driving in Perth: www.transport.wa.gov.au/licensing

Bicycles

Perth

Please visit here to know about cycling in Perth: www.transport.wa.gov.au/cycling/

Shopping

Perth

The two main shopping malls in Perth are the Murray and Hay Street malls. Both of the malls are closed to traffic and offer a wide range of specialty stores. Several arcades run off either Murray street mall or the Hay street mall and link the city from St George's Terrace to Wellington Street. The two main department stores in Perth are [Myer](#) and [David Jones](#). Both these stores can also be found in the larger [shopping centres](#) in the suburbs. Myer is the largest department store in the city and it is located in Forrest Chase. David Jones runs between Murray Street mall and Hay Street mall.

To find out more about shopping in Perth: www.lookatwa.com.au/Shopping/

Bargaining/Haggling

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

If you are paying by CASH and, if you are buying more than one item, you may have more **bargaining power**. Begin the bargaining process by asking: What's the best price you can give me? or, at a garage sale, you might pick up several items whose combined total is \$50 and say: ill offer you \$30 for all of these

Purchasing an Item

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

Yellow Pages

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

Emergency Contacts

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: **131 444** - Nearest Police Station, **08 9222 1111** - Police Central

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 a hospital**. Dial **000**

State Emergency Service

The State Emergency Service (**SES**) is an emergency and rescue service dedicated to assisting 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

Lifelines **13 11 14** service is staffed by trained volunteer telephone counsellors who are ready to take calls 24 hours 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, cared for, and understood. 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** can be reached by calling **131 126**.

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Interpreting Services

For interpreting services dial **13 14 50**.

Health

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

Students may also take out additional cover in the form of Extra OSHC, and students who could not previously access OSHC may now be able to access Optional OSHC. Some students may be exempt from enrolling in the OSHC, such as students from countries whose Governments may have Reciprocal Health Agreements for students in Australia.

Note: only some reciprocal health agreements cover students in Australia, some will only cover visitors. You should determine if you are eligible before you apply for your visa to come to Australia. Further information on OSHC can be found at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/Publishing.nsf/Content/Overseas+Student+Health+Cover+FAQ-1>

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 is covered by the OSHC?

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.

For more information, please visit: www.medibank.com.au/Client/StaticPages/OSHCHome.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 doctors 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 later you can claim the government fee back from your OSHC provider.

How do I make a claim?

For more information, please visit: www.medibank.com.au/Client/StaticPages/OSHCHome.aspx

Renewal information

For more information, please visit: www.medibank.com.au/Client/StaticPages/OSHCHome.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 Health System - Medicare

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 Health 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 the 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 hospitalization. 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 doctors 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 doctors 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 GPs 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 doctors surgery early in the morning (8:00 am – 8:30 am) for an appointment. Please note, however, that it may not be possible to get an appointment on the same day - you may have to wait one or two days before you can see a doctor (in some regional areas of Australia it may be a week or two before you can get an appointment).

Seeing a Doctor

When you attend your appointment, the doctor will ask you questions about your health and may give you a brief physical examination, such as checking your breathing, your throat, ears, etc. The doctor will then give you some advice regarding management of your illness, and may give you a prescription for some medication. If you have had, or need to take time off studies, you will need to get a medical certificate from the doctor to provide to your education provider. If your illness is more serious or the doctor is unsure of a diagnosis, she or he may refer you for further tests, e.g. 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 for a very long time. It is common to wait for more than 3 hours, and at some hospitals you could wait as long as 5 to 6 hours to see a doctor. It is a common practice for doctors and nurses to make an initial assessment of your condition when you arrive to prioritise the emergency 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 can leave. Emergency Department rules may include keeping you a little longer to observe your condition, and if it is safe to send you home with recommended treatment. It is the same for all patients.

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 can walk in any pharmacy/chemist/drug store in Australia and you 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 of 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 or phone **131 450**. *2008 Applicable limit

Health Issues

General Health *(Source: Education Abroad Program, UCLA)*

Maintaining good health is of utmost importance when studying abroad. While living in a different environment, it is a good way to change a daily routine, it is important for students who are experiencing difficulties in their own country (relationship, health, emotional, substance abuse, etc.) to realise those problems come with you.

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

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

Mental Health

Doctors in most local Medical Centres are able to help with regard to mental health issues such as homesickness, grief, bullying, stress, anxiety, relationships, etc. You could also speak to the Student Support Officer at PEIA.

Physical Health

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

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

Sexual Health

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

Managing Finances

Initial Expenses

This is an example of some of the expenses you might encounter when you first come to Australia:

Estimated Cost	Expense
\$ 350 - \$ 500 /week	Temporary accommodation
\$ 600 - \$ 1,000	Rental bond (four weeks rent @ \$150-\$200/week)
\$ 300 - \$ 400	Advance rent (two weeks @ \$150-\$200/week)
Normally free with 2-year agreement*	Electricity connection
Normally free with 2-year agreement*	Telephone connection
Normally free with 2-year agreement*	Gas connection
Normally free with 2-year agreement*	Internet connection
Normally free with 2-year agreement*	Mobile phone and/or network sim card
\$100 - \$500	Household items, e.g. furniture, crockery, etc.
\$100 - \$150/ month	Transportation
\$ 50 - \$ 200	Textbooks & Educational Expenses
	Incidentals
	Insurance – house, car, health
\$ 1,500 - \$ 3,000	Estimated Total:

Ongoing Expenses

Once you have established yourself in accommodation, you will need to budget for ongoing costs. This is an example of monthly expenses you may have if you live in **SINGLE accommodation** (costs will reduce if you are in shared accommodation):

Estimated Cost	Monthly Expense
\$600	Rent (four weeks rent @ \$ 150/week)
\$ 250	Food (four weeks @ \$50-150/week)
\$30	Electricity
\$30	Telephone
\$30	Gas
\$30	Internet
\$30	Mobile phone
\$100	Entertainment
\$100	Transportation
\$100	Educational Expenses
	Incidentals
\$40	Insurance – house, car, health
\$ 1340	Estimated Total

Setting up a Bank Account

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

To open a bank account, you will need:

- Your passport (with arrival date stamped by Australian immigration)
- Student ID card
- Money to deposit into the account (this can be as little as \$10)

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

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

Bank & ATM Locations

BANK	WEBSITE	LOCAL ADDRESS
ANZ	www.anz.com.au	Perth: 77 St. Georges Terrace Perth, Western Australia, Phone: 13 13 14
Commonwealth Bank	www.commbank.com.au	Perth: Mezzanine Level, 150 St. Georges Terrace, Perth, Western Australia Phone: 13 22 21
National Australia Bank	www.nab.com.au	Perth: 50 St. Georges Terrace Perth, Western Australia, Phone: (08) 9441 9362
St George Bank	www.stgeorge.com.au	Perth: Level 11, 152-158 St. Georges Terrace Perth, Western Australia Phone: (08) 6226 9100
Westpac Bank	www.westpac.com.au	Perth: 109 St. Georges Terrace Perth, Western Australia, Phone: 13 20 32

Please note – this is only a sample list of some financial institutions in Australia with no particular recommendation.

Please visit these websites and find Banks & ATMs nearest to you:

www.lookatwa.com.au/AboutPerth/banks.html

<https://www.truelocal.com.au/find/banks/sa/adelaide-city/adelaide>

Banking Hours

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

Bank Fees

Bank fees are **the price you pay for the products and services that banks offer**. Different banks charge different fees for different products and services, and the best way to find out what fees apply is to simply ask your bank. Any fees that apply to your accounts are fully disclosed in information leaflets and the terms and conditions that your bank can provide before you open your account. **Some banks waive some fees if you are a full-time student.** The way you do your banking may also affect the fees that apply: for example, internet banking rather than walking into a branch. If you don't understand any fee that has been charged, contact your bank.

Account Statements *(Source Australian Bankers' Association Inc)*

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

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

Accessing Money from My Account

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

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.

ATMs (Automatic Telling Machines)

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

Using an ATM *(Source Australian Bankers' Association Inc)*

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

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

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

Safety When Carrying Money

The first and fundamental rule of safety when carry money is: Don't carry large amounts of cash!

Second rule: Don't advertise the fact that you are carrying money!

- Divide your cash into different locations on your person (front pocket, coat pocket, shoes, etc.)
- Keep your wallet in one of your front pockets at all times
- Do not carry cash in a backpack or back pocket
- Sew a small money pocket into the cuff of a trouser, sleeve of a shirt or even a bra
- Divide your bank/credit cards and keep them in separate locations
- Do not place money or valuables in lockers
- Be very careful how you carry your handbag, and never leave it open for someone to slip their hand inside.

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EFTPOS

Short for Electronic Funds Transfer at Point-of-Sale EFTPOS terminals can be found where goods or services are sold for example supermarkets service stations restaurants doctors' surgeries and gymnasiums. You can pay for goods and make payments through EFTPOS using your ATM card, rather than paying with cash. At some stores, when you use EFTPOS, you can also withdraw cash from your account at the same time. You should be aware that some retailers put limits on how much cash can be withdrawn, which may depend on the amount that is spent in the store. When paying by EFTPOS, you also use your PIN to access your account. The same rules apply about keeping the PIN confidential and never handing it over to anyone. Be careful no one is looking over your shoulder when you enter your PIN. *See: Using an ATM.*

Telephone Banking

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

Electronic Transfers

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

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

Over-the-Counter Service

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

Paying Bills

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

A note of caution on direct debits – they are a convenient way to pay everyday bills, but always make sure you’ve got enough money in your account to cover the cost of the debit. If your pay or allowance goes into your account on a certain date, make sure your direct debit payments are scheduled to come out of your account after your pay goes in, or you might end up with an overdrawn account or a dishonoured payment – both can cost you money.

Working in Australia

Permission to Work

As of 26 April 2008, people granted student visas will automatically receive permission to work with their visa grant. Most student visa holders will no longer need to apply separately in Australia for permission to work. Please note that you will NOT be able to work in Australia until the first official day of classes when the education provider confirms your study commencement. Your education provider may do this automatically on the first official day of classes, or you may need to request it from them.

Working while Studying *(Source: Department of Home Affairs)*

You are not permitted to start work until you have commenced your course of study. You can work a maximum of 40 hours per fortnight during the term and unlimited hours when your course is not in session.

The Department of Home Affairs (DIPB) considers your course to be in session for the duration of the advertised semesters (including periods when exams are being held) if you have completed your studies and your Confirmation of Enrolment is still in effect if you are undertaking another course, during a break from your main course and the points will be credited to your main course.

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

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Trav/Stud/More/Visa-conditions/visa-conditions-students>

Finding Work

You may find it difficult to find work in Australia as you will be joining the general Australian population in your search; therefore, you should not rely on income from employment when budgeting to pay for living expenses. There is no guarantee that employment companies will find work for you.

There are many different ways to find a job in Australia:

- Newspapers
- PEIA Notice Board
- **Online** - try these online companies:
 - www.seek.com.au
 - www.careerone.com.au

Earning an Income

Taxes are managed through the **Australian Taxation Office (ATO)**. The tax you pay depends on how much you earn.

Getting a Tax File Number

You must obtain a Tax File Number to be able to work in Australia. A tax file number (TFN) is your unique reference number to our tax system. When you start work, your employer will ask you to complete a tax file number declaration form. If you do not provide a TFN, your employment will be taxed at the highest personal income tax rate, which will mean less money in your wages each week.

You can apply for your TFN online at www.ato.gov.au or phone 13 28 61, 8 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday. For the ATO translating and interpreter service phone: 13 14 50.

Taxation Returns

If you pay too much tax, you are entitled to a refund. To get a refund, you will need to lodge a tax return. You can lodge online using **e-tax** (free), by mailing a **paper tax return**, or by paying a **registered tax agent** to complete and lodge the return for you. If you lodge by e-tax, your refund will normally be issued within 14 days.

- Lodge online using e-tax at <http://www.ato.gov.au/>
- For a registered tax agent visit <http://www.tpb.gov.au/>
- Tax returns are lodged at the end of the Australian tax year – (1 July to 30 June).

Superannuation

If your monthly wage is more than AU\$450, your employer must contribute an additional sum equal to 9.5 % of your wage into a superannuation (pension) account for you. In most cases, you can access your contributions when you leave Australia permanently, although the contributions will be taxed. Check your eligibility to claim superannuation and to apply for your payment, visit: www.ato.gov.au/departaustralia You will need to provide the details of your superannuation fund. (Source: Australian Taxation Office)

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.

Legal Services & Advice

If you do break the law, you will be arrested and you will need to attend a court appearance. You will need legal representation to negotiate Australia's complex legal system. Please visit here to find more:

www.legalaid.wa.gov.au

Child Protection Laws

Western Australia

Department for Child Protection

<http://www.slp.wa.gov.au/statutes/swans.nsf>

Principal Acts

Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)

Other relevant Acts

Adoption Act 1994 (WA)

Child Care Services Act 2007 (WA)

Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)

Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006 (WA)

Community Protection (Offender Reporting and Registration) Act 2004 (WA)

Family Court Act 1997 (WA)

Restraining Orders Act 1997 (WA)

Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)

Young Offenders Act 1994 (WA)

(Source: Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Security

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 doorstep
- If you have to have something delivered while you are out, have the neighbours collect it
- When out, leave a radio or television on or a light in the evening to give the impression you are home
- Keep cash and valuables out of sight.

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

Insurance

If you are in a rental property, you can 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.

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Internet Safety & Security

Internet Access on Arrival

Internet cafes are located in most major cities, or book a computer at a community library. You can use also internet at State library Western Australia, **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**, or visit any of the Adelaide City Libraries: <https://www.cityofadelaide.com.au/your-community/library-services/computers/>

The Internet has now become an essential business, social, entertainment and educational resource for most Australians. The increasing level of economic transactions on the Internet is making it the focus of criminal activities.

It is important that Internet users protect themselves from falling prey to these activities. The following tips list some simple precautions you can take to minimise the chances of becoming a victim of online criminals:

Install antivirus and other security software, such as anti-spyware and anti-spam software. Use and update this software regularly.

Regularly download and install the latest security patches for your computer software, including your web-browser. Use automatic software security updates where possible.

Use a firewall and make sure it is turned on. Firewalls help prevent unauthorized access to, and communications from, your computer.

Delete suspect emails immediately. Don't open these emails.

Don't click on links in suspect emails. Visiting websites through clicking on links in suspect emails may result in malware (malicious software) such as a trojan being downloaded to your computer. This is a commonly used and effective means of compromising your computer.

Only open an attachment to an email where the sender and the contents of the attachment are known to you.

Don't download files or applications from suspect websites. The file or application could be malware. Sometimes the malware may even be falsely represented as e-security software designed to protect you.

Use long and random passwords for any application that provides access to your personal identity information, including logging onto your computer. Don't use dictionary words as a password. Ideally, the password should be eight or more characters in length. Change passwords regularly.

Use a limited permission account for browsing the web, creating documents, reading email, and playing games. If your operating system allows you to create a limited permission account, this can prevent malicious code from being installed onto your computer. A limited permission account is an account that does not have administrator status.

Personal Safety *(Source: Australian Federal Police)*

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. Safe options include 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
- If you are socializing in a public place never leave your drink unattended. Read about Drink Spiking under alcohol Smoking and Drugs,

If you are **out and about**:

- Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you, especially if you are alone or it is dark
- Whenever possible, travel with a friend or as part of a group
- Stay in well-lit areas as much as possible
- Walk confidently and at a steady pace
- Make eye contact with people when walking: let them know that you have noticed their presence
- Do not respond to conversation from strangers on the street or in a car and 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.

Hitchhiking

A person who waves at unknown drivers from the side of the road to request a ride with a driver further along the road is called a Hitchhiker. Some travel companies promote hitchhiking as an inexpensive means of travelling around Australia. HOWEVER: Many crimes have been committed against innocent hitchhikers including violent personal crimes and abductions. You do not know anything about the person whose car you get into.

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

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.

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Buses

Waiting for a bus:

- Avoid isolated bus stops
- Stand away from the curb until the bus arrives
- Don't open your purse or wallet while boarding the bus - have your money/pass already in hand
- At night, wait in well-lit areas and near other people
- Check timetables to avoid long waits.

Riding on the bus:

- Sit as close to the bus driver as possible
- Stay alert and be aware of the people around you
- If someone bothers you, change seats and tell the driver
- Keep your purse/packages close by your side. Keep your wallet inside a front coat pocket
- Check your purse/wallet if someone is jostling, crowding or pushing you
- If you see any suspicious activity, inform the driver.

Trains

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

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

Taxis

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

- Phone for a taxi in preference to hailing one on the street. A record is kept by taxi companies of all bookings made
- You are entitled to choose the taxi/taxi driver of your preference. If a driver makes you feel uncomfortable, you are within your rights to select another taxi
- Sit wherever you feel most comfortable. This may mean travelling in the back seat of the taxi
- Specify to the driver the route you wish to take to reach your destination. Speak up if the driver takes a different route to the one you have specified or are familiar with
- Take note of the Taxi Company and fleet number. This will help in identifying the taxi if required. If you are walking a friend to catch a taxi, consider letting the driver know that you have noted these details e.g., "Look after my friend, Mr./Ms. Yellow Cab No.436"
- Stay alert to your surroundings and limit your conversation to general topics
- If you don't want your home address known, stop a few houses away from your destination.

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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.

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 Department of Transport your driver's license details and your residential address in Australia.

Insurance

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

Road Rules

If you are going to drive in Australia, no matter whether you are an experienced driver and have an international driver's license or not **YOU MUST KNOW THE ROAD RULES** before you attempt to drive (even 10 meters)! 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.

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. The police issue fines and loss of demerit points when you are caught breaking the law.

Offences have a different number of demerit points, depending on the severity. For more information go to:
<http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/licensing/yourlicence/14411.asp>

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. **Speed kills.**

Mobile Phones and Driving

The use of **mobile phones** when driving is against the law, unless you are using a hands-free kit. Sending texts while driving is also against the law. Operating a mobile phone while driving makes you **nine times more likely to be involved** in a collision. Police issue fines if you are caught. Fines are considerable and demerit point penalties apply.

License Requirements *(Source: Roads and Traffic Authority)*

If you hold a current driver license from another country, you are allowed to drive on your overseas license as long as:

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

To find more information about driving and getting driving license in Western Australia, please visit:

www.transport.wa.gov.au

Most overseas visitors are not required to obtain an Australian license.

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

When driving in Australia, you must carry your overseas driver license. Your license must be written in English or, if the license is not in English, you must either carry an English translation or an International Driving Permit. An International Driving Permit is not a license to drive; you also need to carry a current driving license. If you are a temporary overseas visitor and you wish to obtain an Australian license, seek advice from your local Police Station.

Drink Driving

If you are going to drink alcohol, don't drive. If you are going to drive, don't drink alcohol. Alcohol has been found to be a cause 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 blood-alcohol content above the legal limit is dangerous to others, as well as yourself, and severe legal penalties apply.

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 metabolizes alcohol at around one standard drink per hour, the BAC level drops, unless more alcohol is consumed. BAC is measured with a breathalyser, or by analysing a sample of blood.

Legal BAC Limits

There are legal limits as to the BAC level permissible if you are driving: **If your Blood Alcohol Content ("BAC") is higher than 0.05 - you will be fined and lose demerit points.**

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To find more information, please visit:

<http://www.legaid.wa.gov.au/InformationAboutTheLaw/CarsandDriving/Trafficoffences/Pages/DrinkandDrugDriving.aspx>

Factors Affecting your BAC:

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

- **Body size:** A smaller person will have a higher BAC than a larger person, because the alcohol is concentrated in a smaller body mass
- **Empty stomach:** Someone with an empty stomach will reach a higher BAC sooner than someone who has just eaten a meal. Food in the stomach slows down the rate at which alcohol passes into the bloodstream
- **Body fat:** People with a lot of body fat tend to have higher BACs because alcohol is not absorbed into fatty tissue, so alcohol is concentrated in a smaller body mass
- **Women:** After drinking the same amount of alcohol, a woman will almost always have a higher BAC than a male
- Because of all these variable factors, counting the number of standard drinks you consume can only give a rough guide to your BAC. For more detailed information about alcohol and how it affects you, please see the Australian Drug Foundation website: www.druginfo.adf.org.au

Drinking Limits Advice *(Source: Australian Federal Police)*

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) 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
- It is safest not to drink alcohol at all if you are going to drive. The more alcohol you have in your body, the more risk you have of being involved in an accident
- **At 0.05% Blood Alcohol Content (BAC),** your risk of being involved in a road accident is double that of a 0.00% reading
- **At 0.1% BAC** your risk is more than seven times as high of being involved in a road accident, than at 0.00%
- **At 0.15%** your risk increases to 25 times that of driving at 0.00%.

DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE.

Alcohol, Smoking, & 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/shot (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
- Premixed 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. There are 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, dining areas, and workplaces.

For WA Legislation, visit: www.tobaccocontrol.health.wa.gov.au/legislation

Drugs (Source: Australian Drug Foundation)

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** immediately to report it and get help.

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Avoiding Dangerous Areas and Activities

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

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

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

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

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

Making New Friends

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 socializing 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.** Crimes against international students are sometimes 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. Certain **precautions** may make it more difficult for a possible perpetrator:

- When socializing, 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 at WA Sexual Assault Services – 131 444.

From a public phone or mobile phone, ring the police on 000.

Do not wash, shower, change clothes or clean up in any way until after talking to the police and going to the hospital. You could destroy vital evidence. Don't drink alcohol or take tranquillizers or other drugs, as you will have to give a clear account of what has happened. Try to remember everything you can about your attacker.

Remember, **you are the victim**. You have nothing to feel guilty or ashamed about.

Police officers are aware that a person, who has been assaulted, sexually or otherwise, is likely to be suffering from emotional shock. They will do all they can to make things as easy as possible for you. It is likely they will provide a female police officer for a female victim. If not, you have the right to request one. You can also ask the police to contact a friend, family member, interpreter, or religious adviser to be in attendance with you when you are dealing with the circumstances surrounding the report of assault. For more help, please visit www.wwda.org.au

Outdoor Safety

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 practicing sun safe behaviours.

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

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

Beach Safety

Understanding the ocean is very important - the more you know about how waves, wind and tides affect conditions in the water, the better able you are to keep yourself safe, or even rescue others, from danger. Recognizing 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

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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 *(Source: Surf Lifesaving Australia)*

Before entering the surf, always make note of a landmark such as a building or headland that can be seen from the water and used as a guide for maintaining a fixed position. Also, check the depth of any gutter and the height of any sandbank before diving under waves – this will help prevent spinal injury.

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

Waves of any size and force should not be fought against and should be negotiated by diving underneath, giving you time to reach the bottom and lie as flat as possible on the sand while the wave passes over. Your hands can be dug into the sand in front at arm's length for stability and as a pull forward when ready to surface.

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

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

Stick to your predetermined path on the swim out.

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

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 liter 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.

Motorists Caught in Bush Fires *(Source: NRMA)*

Bush fires are common occurrences in Australia during our often long hot summers. If you are in smoke and fire-affected areas, you should stay off the roads. If you must get in the car, put your headlights on, dress in protective clothing and footwear, and make sure you have food and water: you could be stuck for long periods of time if your journey is blocked by road closures. Turn the car radio on and keep it tuned to local stations for bush fire updates.

If you are caught in the middle of a bush fire, park the car immediately and remain calm.

Look for a clear area, preferably off the road. Areas clear of grass or bush are safest - they will not sustain fires of high intensity.

Do not leave the vehicle. Many people have lost their lives by exiting the vehicle only to be trapped on foot in the open. Your vehicle will help protect you from radiant heat, the chief danger.

Switch the ignition off. It is unlikely that a vehicle's fuel tank will explode from the heat of a passing bush or grass fire.

Close all windows and vents or turn vents to recycle.

Put the headlights on so that the car is as visible as possible, especially to fire tankers.

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Everyone must get down on the floor, below window height and cover all exposed skin with a wool or cotton blanket. Do not use synthetics, which may give off toxic vapours or melt.

Stay in the vehicle until the fire front has passed. Generally, this will take between 30 seconds and one minute. During this time, it will be hot, noisy, and frightening. It will last a short time, even though it may seem longer.

If you have water, drink it.

Never attempt to drive through smoke or flame. Crashes can occur when drivers run off the road, striking trees or other cars.

Once the fire front has passed, exit the vehicle and inspect it for damage before proceeding.

Do not proceed until you are satisfied that the fire has passed and that you are not likely to be trapped a second time.

Falling trees and branches are a hazard during and after intense fires. Do not park or drive under trees.

Exit the area as quickly as possible. Remember: fire vehicles may be trying to enter the area and your presence may hinder firefighting operations.

In the Outback *(Source: Visit Victoria. com)*

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).

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Obey road closure signs and stay on recognised routes.

Fires in desert and bush areas can spread very quickly. If required, be prepared to evacuate the area immediately.

Australian wildlife and livestock often graze on the roadside and can stray onto the road. Be very careful when driving at sunrise, sunset, and at night, when animals are most active. If an animal crosses in front of you, brake gently, do not swerve wildly to avoid it.

During daylight hours always drive with your headlights on low beam, as outback conditions can make it difficult to see oncoming vehicles.

Storm Safety

Storms can happen anywhere and at any time of the year. Storms are more common during storm season – from October to the end of April, but it is important to be aware all year round.

Severe storms can cause major damage. They may be accompanied by torrential rain, strong winds, large hailstones, loud thunder, and lightning. Storms can cause flash flooding, unroof buildings, and damage trees and powerlines. You can also be indirectly affected by storms even if your property is not damaged; such as losing power, or access roads being cut.

The SES is responsible for managing the clean-up and helping people during and after a storm.

During a storm, there are some things you can do to stay safe:

- Stay indoors and away from windows
- Unplug sensitive electrical devices like computers, televisions and video recorders
- Listen to your radio for weather updates
- Don't use a landline telephone during an electrical storm.

If you are caught outside during 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 meters 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 call **000**.

Anaphylaxis – allergic reactions (Source: Queensland Health www.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre/bits_stings)

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 the following 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 e.g., 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.

Settling in

Living in Perth

Perth City Centre is located alongside the peaceful waters of the Swan River, twenty kilometres inland of the Indian Ocean on the West Coast of Australia. The Perth city centre bustles with activity and offers a range of choices for shopping. More about the Perth City Centre at: www.Perthtouristcentre.com.au/Perth.php

Weather and Seasons

Perth Weather and Climate: Perth has a Mediterranean climate. Perth weather is recorded and forecast in degrees Celsius.

Time Zones

Perth

Perth time zone is +8 hours GMT. Perth is two hours behind Sydney and Melbourne, and in the summer, daylight saving time 3 hours behind Sydney and Melbourne. Visitors to Perth can enjoy a great outdoors lifestyle - even in the colder winter months of the year.

Perth has a Mediterranean climate (it has more hours of sunshine than any other Australian capital city). This has the locals and visitors enjoying the city's vast range of outdoor activities, from relaxing picnics in a parkland setting to more energetic pursuits, such as jogging on the beach or wind surfing on the Swan River and the Indian Ocean.

Accommodation

PEIA is interested in students being safely accommodated in order that they can concentrate on their studies. It is important to have your accommodation organised prior to your arrival in Australia.

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 cost-effective to live further from the campus but closer to shops and public transport.

Types of Accommodation

Homestay

Homestay is a unique opportunity for overseas students to experience Australian culture by living with a family.

PEIA has an arrangement with Australian Homestay Network (**AHN**) who organised this accommodation for you. You can find out more information on www.homestaynetwork.org

AHN Perth Pricing;

<https://www.homestaynetwork.org/perth-pricing/>

Rentals

Share accommodation

Newspapers have sections for rentals, and websites can help the international students find safe and comfortable accommodation in Australia. These arrangements can be sharing a house or flat or renting a full unit, town house, or housing with friends. These arrangements suit students who are in the country for a while and are comfortable with their new country living arrangements. The approximate cost of share accommodation is \$150 to \$250AUD per week and renting full unit; town house or house can be \$400 to \$600 per week; which students can share with friends.

Accommodation to rent and share can also be found at the following websites.

Perth

<http://perth.gumtree.com.au>

www.reiwa.com.au

www.realestate.com.au

Budget Hotels and Guesthouses

Budget hotels and guesthouses typically involve accommodation in a dormitory or a private room, and they are common among language or short course students and backpackers. Costs vary between AUD\$15 to AUD\$50.