



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

MORE THAN A SCHOOL

FRESHWATERCC.QLD.EDU.AU

Freshwater Christian College
Administered by Cairns Christian College Ltd
CRICOS Provider Number 01033E

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Section 1 - Welcome

Principal's Welcome

Freshwater Christian College welcomes international students to our campus. The College provides a safe, caring yet challenging environment in which to pursue your studies.

The current student body contains students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. In recent years graduates from our College have generally been able to gain entry into University courses of their choice.

We welcome your enquiries.

MR DOUG HOLTAM
B.A., M.Ed.
Principal and Chief Executive Officer

International Student Officer's Welcome

Welcome to Freshwater Christian College. Our College is set in a beautiful location in Cairns far north 'tropical' Queensland. With around 560 students from Prep to Year 12 with Kindergarten, and very friendly staff, we hope you find studying at Freshwater Christian College a rewarding experience.

In this handbook you will find basic information to help you plan for your arrival, settle in once you get here, and commence your study with us.

Please feel free to contact me with any queries that you may have. We look forward to watching you grow and prosper at our College.

MRS ANITA HOWARD
Enrolments and Community Relations Officer

Important Information and Emergency Contacts

Education Provider Main Contact Details

369-401 Brinsmead Road, BRINSMEAD, QLD, 4870
PO Box 643, REDLYNCH, QLD, 4870
Tel: +61 7 4055 1337
www.freshwatercc.qld.edu.au
enrolments@fcc.qld.edu.au

International Student Officer

Mrs Anita Howard
Email: anitah@fcc.qld.edu.au
Tel: +61 7 4243 3603

International Student 24 Hour Emergency Contact

Mrs Anita Howard
0419 190 376

or

Mrs Julieanne Lomas
0429 805 440

Homestay Coordinator

Mrs Anita Howard
0419 190 376

Emergency Telephone Numbers:

Police, Fire, Ambulance – 000

Department of Home Affairs (Immigration)
85 Spence Street, Cairns QLD 4870
Counter hours: 9 am to 4 pm - Mondays to Fridays

Medical Centres

The 24 Hour Medical Centre
Corner of Florence and Grafton Streets, Cairns
Tel: 4052 1119

Redlynch Medical Centre
Shop 12/Redlynch Shopping Centre
Larsen Road, Redlynch
Tel: 4039 1255

Transport

BUS: Sunbus
Tel: 4057 7411
http://www.sunbus.com.au/sit_timetable_cairns.htm

TAXI: Black & White Taxis
Tel: 131 008

Public facilities

Location of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs)

344 Mulgrave Road
Cnr Wharf and Abbotts Streets
361-363 Sheridan Street
DFO - 274-302 Mulgrave Road
Stockland Shopping Centre

15 Spence Street
21 Grafton Street
476 Mulgrave Road
Smithfield Shopping Centre
Cairns Central Shopping Centre

Location of Public Telephones

The Esplanade
Abbott Street
DFO - 274-302 Mulgrave Road

Aplin Street
Pease Street
Smithfield Shopping Centre

Stockland Shopping Centre

Cairns Central Shopping Centre

Post Office

Redlynch Shopping Centre

Smithfield Shopping Centre

Cairns Central Shopping Centre

DFO - 274-302 Mulgrave Road

Stockland Shopping Centre

Application Step-by-Step Process

Step 1:

Read the International Student Prospectus

- This is a very important document and contains all of the policies that you need to know. You MUST read this document BEFORE proceeding.

Step 2:

Complete for each student you are enrolling

- International Student Enrolment Application form.
- Note: Freshwater Christian College does not accept applications for enrolment from International Students commencing in Prep, Year 10, Year 11 or Year 12.

Step 3:

Forward to the College

- Completed application form above.
- Copies of Student Report Cards from the previous 2 years of study, including a copy of the latest Student Report;
- A completed Reference Form from the student's current or most recent school Principal is also required if student Report Cards do not record student behaviour or commitment to studies;
- A completed Subject Choices Form if appropriate;
- Appropriate proof of identity and age;
- Written evidence of proficiency in English as a second language;
- Photocopy or scanned copy of passport page with name, photo identification, passport number and expiry date;
- Written piece of work in English, eg; story about their family;
- Payment of the Application Fee;
- Letter of Offer from another registered provider, if applicable;
- Completed Homestay application form, if applicable;
- Application to the Queensland Assessment and Curriculum Authority (QCAA) for relaxation of completed Core requirements, if applicable.

Where the above documents are not in English, certified translations in English are required, with necessary costs to be met by the applicant.

Step 4:

Enrolment Assessment

- An application for enrolment can only be processed when all of the above are in the hands of the Enrolments and Community Relations Officer.
- Applications from overseas students are processed according to established policy and procedures, and are dealt with on their merits.

- Assessment procedures include an evaluation of reports from previous schools and of English language proficiency. In cases where report cards are not available or are inconclusive for any reason, the school may require relevant testing of the applicant to assess the application.
- Once the enrolment assessment has been completed, you will be advised in writing as to the outcome.
- If the application is successful, a Letter of Offer, Written Agreement and Tax Invoice will be issued.
- The Written Agreement must be signed by the student and parents/s and returned to the College
- Payment of the Tax Invoice must be made and received by the College prior to the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) and (if applicable) the Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) documents are issued.

Step 5:

Visa Application and Flights

- Student arranges Visa. Please refer to the Australian Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) website at <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/>
- Student arranges travel to Cairns and advises the College of travel arrangements.

Step 6:

Arrival and commencement

- Student travels to Cairns, Australia and orientation begins.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Things to Do

Before Leaving Home

Apply for passport

Arrange student visa

Make contact with institution

Arrange for immunisations and medications from my doctor

Apply for a credit card and/or arrange sufficient funds

Confirm overseas access to your funds with your bank

Make travel arrangements

Arrange travel insurance

Advise institution of travel details

Arrange accommodation

Arrange transport from airport to accommodation

Pack bags being sure to include the following:

Name and contact details of an institution representative

Enough currency for taxis, buses, phone calls etc. in the event of an emergency

Important documents:

THIS HANDBOOK!

Passport

Letter of offer

CoE

Overseas Student Health Cover insurance policy

ID cards, birth certificate (or copy)

Upon Arrival in Australia

Call home

Settle into accommodation

Open a bank account

Contact institution

Attend international student orientation

Arrange for student ID card

Arrange for stationery and uniforms

Start classes

Apply for tax file number if seeking work

Get involved in student life and associations (eg music, sporting and cultural clubs).

Section 2 - Pre-Arrival

Introduction to Australia

Australia's History

Aboriginal people dream on a timeless continent

Australia's Aboriginal people were thought to have arrived here by boat from South East Asia. At the time of European discovery and settlement, up to one million Aboriginal people lived across the continent as hunters and gatherers. They were scattered in 300 clans and spoke 250 languages and 700 dialects. Each clan had a spiritual connection with a specific piece of land. However, they also travelled widely to trade, find water and seasonal produce and for ritual and totemic gatherings.

Australian culture is founded on stories of battlers, bushrangers and brave soldiers, of sporting heroes, working heroes and plucky migrants. It's all about a fair go, the great outdoors and a healthy helping of irony. Today Australia also defines itself by its Aboriginal heritage, vibrant mix of cultures, innovative ideas and a thriving arts scene.

A wide, brown land

Australia is the sixth largest country in the world. It's about the same size as the 48 mainland states of the USA and 50 per cent larger than Europe, but has the lowest population density in the world - only two people per square kilometre. Australia is the only nation to govern an entire continent and its outlying islands. The mainland is the largest island and the world's smallest, flattest continent.

Film

Australia's extensive film credits include a comic pig called Babe, the post-apocalyptic Mad Max movies, and the blockbuster Australia. Our movies have pushed actors like Nicole Kidman, Judy Davis, Heath Ledger, Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe and the swashbuckling Errol Flynn onto the world stage. Australia the country also often gets a starring role, with landscapes that range from foreboding to romantic and sublime.

The Country

Australia is a natural wonderland of beautiful beaches, crystal blue waters, amazing ancient rock formations and pristine rainforests. Australia is the sixth largest country in the world and has the lowest population density per square kilometre. Australia has 16 world heritage listed properties with its historic townships, bustling cities, vivid landscapes and exotic flora and fauna all adding to its unique appeal. Much of Australia's exotic flora and fauna cannot be found anywhere else in the world and the lifestyle is one second to none.

Culture and Customs

The culture and customs consists of a rich tapestry of nationalities including traditions, legends, myths and folklore. The indigenous 'Dream time' forms the base of tens of thousands of years of spiritual aboriginal art and culture.

Language

In Australia over 200 different languages and dialects are spoken, including 45 indigenous languages. The most commonly spoken languages (other than English) are Italian, Greek, Cantonese, Arabic, Vietnamese and Mandarin.

States and Territories

Australia is made up of six states and two territories. Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory.

Introducing Cairns

Cairns is the heart of Tropical North Queensland and Australia's primary gateway to the Great Barrier Reef. Cairns is a vibrant, eclectic city framed by the spectacular twin backdrops of rainforest mountain ranges and the sparkling Coral Sea. The World Heritage listed Wet Tropics Rainforest, Great Barrier Reef and the Outback are all within easy reach.

The Cairns Esplanade is the city's main attraction with a lovely oceanfront promenade, saltwater swimming lagoon and beach.

Numerous restaurants line the Esplanade, all offering beautiful waterfront views. Thousands of visitors flock to the Esplanade to enjoy the alfresco dining and relax in the beautiful surroundings of this modern city.

Almost a century of architecture is reflected in the city streets - a comfortable blend of traditional Queensland style and contemporary designs. Visit the Reef Casino to view its unique rainforest simulation and the Cairns Regional Gallery to see exceptional art and exhibitions that focus on Indigenous works. There's also the Flecker Botanic Gardens with its Gondwanan Evolutionary Trail that offers a glimpse into the ancient history of the rainforest plants.

Arrival in Cairns is simple, with several domestic and international flights arriving each day.

Introducing Freshwater Christian College

Cairns Christian College was established in 1983 by Cairns Christian Centre in order to provide a high quality education that would support the values of Christian families. The first few years the College operated out of the original Gatton Street buildings, but in 1984 the Brinsmead property was purchased and development of the College facilities soon began. Original families who gave so much of their time and personal finances are honoured in our College house names. In late 2007 Cairns Christian College was rebranded and Freshwater Christian College was born. This change of name brings renewed vigour and excitement about the future.

The College has grown to accommodate both Primary and Secondary schools on the campus, from Prep through to Year 12 with graduates entering varied careers ranging from medicine to apprenticeships and ministry.

A Christian education is an education that supports and promotes Christian faith in the lives of the students while equipping them to become productive contributors to society. A range of strategies are employed to this end. They include:

- Employing teachers who model Christian living and are themselves Christians;
- Christian Studies, class devotions and weekly Chapels;
- Curriculum that develops not just knowledge, but the ability to exercise Godly wisdom
- Values-based education, where Christian values are integrated into all aspects of College life.
- Provision of the scholastic atmosphere that engenders the love of learning, academic excellence and the pursuit of truth through knowledge.

We believe each person — man, woman or child - is precious to God. He or she is unique, with his/her own personality, abilities and God given potential.

We believe parents are the primary educators of their children with a God-given role to “*raise up a child in the way they should go*”. (Proverbs 22:6)

We therefore see education as a partnership between home and school in guiding and developing the capabilities and character of each child to enable them to become all God wants them to be, as happy and productive members of society.

Arranging Visas

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

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

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

Department of Home Affairs (Immigration)

The Australian Government’s Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) provides comprehensive information about student visa requirements and the application process, as well as application document checklists to assist you with your application. Visit www.homeaffairs.gov.au for the latest information.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

As well as links from the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) website the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website www.dfat.gov.au/embassies has a comprehensive list of Australian embassies, high commissions, consulates and representative offices around the world.

Migration Agents

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

Education Agents

Freshwater Christian College does not work with Education Agents and will not accept International Student Enrolment Applications from an Agent.

Please Note: Although able to assist in completing visa applications, Education Agents are NOT licensed to provide migration advice.

Visa Conditions

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

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

For a full list of **mandatory** and **discretionary** student visa conditions please visit www.homeaffairs.gov.au

Arranging Travel

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

You should fly into Cairns International Airport which is the closest international airport to Cairns. Visit www.cairnsairport.com Cairns is located 6.1kms from Cairns International Airport.

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 Freshwater Christian College

Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) issued by Freshwater Christian College

Receipts of payments (e.g. tuition fees, OSHC, bank statements etc.)

Insurance policies

Original or certified copies of your academic transcripts and qualifications

Other personal identification documents, e.g. birth certificate, ID card, driver's licence

Medical records and/or prescriptions

CAAW if you are under 18 years of age.

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

What to Bring

Students are often surprised by how strict Australian Customs Services and quarantine can be. If you're in doubt about whether your goods are prohibited or not, **declare it anyway** on the Incoming Passenger Card which you will receive on the plane. Students have received on the

spot fines for not declaring items. Visit the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) homepage <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity>

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

And also let your family and friends know “**What can't be mailed to Australia?**”

Baggage allowances flying into Australia will vary according to your carrier, flight class and country of origin. Please check with your carrier prior to departure. Economy passengers are generally permitted 1 x checked luggage (35kg) and 1 x carry-on (7kg) for international flights, but only 20kg of checked luggage on domestic flights within Australia. This will significantly limit the amount of things you can bring, especially if you will fly within Australia to get to your final destination.

Therefore, it is essential to think the packing process through very carefully. You will be able to purchase most things upon arrival in Australia but the price may be higher than in your own country.

Seasonal Considerations

Summer in Australia is from December to February, autumn from March to May, winter from June to August, and spring from September to November. For most of the country the hottest months are January and February, however in Cairns the hot months can continue until April/May. If you arrive in June or July, the coldest months of the year, you may need to bring or buy light winter clothing.

Clothing

Students at our school wear a uniform. We have a formal uniform which is worn 3-4 days per week and a sports uniform which is worn 1-2 days per week, depending on your Year level. See your timetable for further information.

Off campus, students usually dress informally. Shorts, skirts or jeans with t-shirts or blouses, sneakers or “running shoes” are almost standard dress. Sandals are the most common footwear. It is acceptable for both men and women to wear shorts and sleeveless t-shirts. This is common during the hotter months.

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

Other Items You Might Need to Include (most can also be purchased in Australia)

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

Bringing Your Computer

Bringing a PC or laptop into Australia may be a little more complicated. Items owned and used for more than 12 months prior to arrival are allowed in tax-free. Proof of the date of purchase and purchase price may be required. Computers which are less than 12 months old and over 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.

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

Mobile Phones & Laptops

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

On Your Flight

Wear comfortable, layered clothing so that you are able to make adjustments according to the local weather. Remember – if you are flying from a northern hemisphere winter into the Australian summer it will be **very HOT** so wear light weight clothing underneath, and have a pair of sandals or lighter shoes in your hand luggage if you need cooler footwear. Alternatively extra clothing may be required on-hand if flying into the Australian winter season.

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

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

Entry into Australia

Australian Immigration

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

Baggage Claim

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

Detector Dogs

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

Australian Customs and Quarantine

Once you have your luggage you will go through Customs. Be careful about what you bring into Australia. Some items you might bring from overseas can carry pests and diseases that Australia doesn't have.

You must **declare ALL** food, meat, fruit, plants, seeds, wooden souvenirs, animal or plant materials or their derivatives.

Australia has **strict quarantine laws** and tough on-the-spot fines. Every piece of luggage is now screened or x-rayed by quarantine officers, detector dog teams and x-ray machines. If you fail to declare or dispose of any quarantine items, or make a false declaration, you will get caught. In addition to on-the-spot fines, you could be prosecuted and fined more than AU\$60,000 and risk 10 years in prison. All international mail is also screened. Some products may require **treatment** to make them safe. Items that are **restricted** because of the risk of pests and disease will be seized and destroyed by the **Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS)**.

For more detailed information about bringing in food, animals, plants, animal or plant materials or their derivatives visit <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity>

Arrivals Hall

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

Keeping in Contact

Before you leave home, you should provide your family and friends, and your education provider in Australia, with details of your flights to Australia and where you will be staying when you arrive. (Do not change these details without informing them). Once you have arrived in Australia, you should then let your family and friends know that you have **arrived safely**. It is important to **ALWAYS** let someone know where you are and how to contact you by phone or by post.

Accessing Money

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

How Much to Bring

You will need to make sure you have enough funds to support you when you first arrive. It is recommended that you have approximately **AU\$500 to AU\$1000** available for the first two to three weeks to pay for start-up items, like a mobile phone. You should bring most of this money as either **Traveller's Cheques** or on an international credit card. Traveller's cheques can be cashed at any bank or currency exchange in Australia.

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

Currency Exchange

Only Australian currency can be used in Australia. If you have not brought some with you, you will need to arrange this as soon as possible after arrival. You can do this at the airport. Once you have arrived in Cairns, you can also change money at any bank or at currency exchanges in Cairns.

Electronic Transfer

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

ATMs

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

Credit Cards

All major international credit cards are accepted in Australia but you must remember that **repayments** to many of these cards can only be made in the country where they were issued.

Do not rely on being able to get a credit card once you arrive in Australia because this is very difficult due to credit and identification laws.

Arranging Accommodation

Freshwater Christian College will assist you with this.

Staying with Friends or Family

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

Bringing My Family

International students studying in Australia on a student visa may be able to bring a guardian if they are under 18 years of age. There may also be exceptional circumstances where a student over 18 years of age may need a guardian for religious or cultural reasons. Please visit www.homeaffairs.gov.au for further information.

Issues to Consider

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

- The cost of airfares for your family to and from Australia;
- Rent for a home;
- Limited employment opportunities for your family;
- 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 family will adjust to school in Australia;
- Waiting lists for child care centres; and
- Whether to come alone to Australia first and arrange things for your family, or to all come at the same time.

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

Child Care

For those students who are bringing Mum or Dad and a younger sibling, parents may experience finding suitable childcare in Australia requires patience and planning. Waiting lists for places in most childcare centres are long.

For more information, please visit <http://www.echildcare.com.au/region/cairns/>

Section 3 - Settling-In

Living in Cairns

The Cairns region covers more than 1750 sq km and includes several major national parks and the state's highest mountain peak, Mt Bartle Frere, near Babinda in the south. Cairns is the gateway to two of the world's greatest natural treasures – the reef and the rainforest – both of which are World Heritage listed. Mountains, beaches, tidal wetlands, freshwater lakes, mudflats, mangrove swamps, bays, rivers and rich coastal plains are the dominant features of the tropical environment.

Latest statistics show that the greater Cairns area has a population of more than 130,000. The population is mostly concentrated in the main communities of Cairns City and its suburbs, along the Marlin Coast to the north, and the growth corridors of the south including White Rock, Centenary Heights and Edmonton. Along the Marlin Coast the northern beach communities include Holloways Beach, Yorkeys Knob, Trinity Beach, Kewarra Beach, Clifton Beach, Palm Cove and Ellis Beach.

Swimming in the sea risks stings from deadly jellyfish from November to May. Swimming within stinger net enclosures is essential. The following beaches have nets: Ellis, Kewarra, Trinity, Palm Cove, Clifton and Yorkeys Knob.

Cinemas, video stores, and entertainment facilities in general are very good in Cairns. There are several very good public libraries at City, Smithfield, Earlville, and Edmonton; live theatre groups in Cairns; and most sports are catered for, depending on the season. Cairns is also well regarded for its range and quality of restaurants.

Weather and Seasons

The climate in Cairns is tropical, with two main seasons: The Dry season, which runs from about May to September, has mostly cloudless skies and a temperature of approximately 27 degrees during the day, cooling to 15 to 19 degrees at night. Rainfall is lower during this time of the year.

The Wet season, which usually starts in October, has temperatures of up to 36 degrees during the day, sometimes cooling to 24 to 26 degrees at night, a very high humidity of up to 90 per cent and heavy rainfalls. During the wet season tropical depressions and cyclones may bring high winds and very heavy rain.

Cyclones are a very real threat in north Queensland and for people that have never experienced them they can be terrifying. The local community organisation (State Emergency Service) have cyclone disaster plans in place. In order to minimise the impact of a cyclone, families are expected to prepare themselves well in advance of the cyclone season. Depending on when a cyclone could potentially reach the coast, a Cyclone Watch or Cyclone Warning is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology. According to the bureau, the best source of information is the radio. They provide regular live updates to 4CA, Hot FM and at www.bom.gov.au

We do receive plenty of rain in the Cairns Region, but also need to ensure there is enough for everyone. The Wet Tropics environment is dependant on large amounts of rain in the wet season to nourish the fragile network of flora and fauna in our rainforests, rivers and reef. The use of our water must be shared equitably between domestic, industrial and commercial and agricultural

users while at the same time ensuring there are sufficient water supplies to maintain natural environmental values.

Time Zones

Cairns time is the same as Brisbane time. Standard time zone is UTC/GMT + 10 hours and we don't currently have daylight saving time. The time zone abbreviation is EST – Eastern Standard Time.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/custom.html?continent=australasia>

Types of Accommodation

Homestay

The College will arrange for a suitable homestay family for each student on an individual basis, after taking into careful consideration the student's needs and requirements. Each homestay family undergoes a careful recruitment process. Homestay Hosts are expected to:

- Develop positive relationships with Students which are based on mutual trust and communication.
- Acknowledge the uniqueness of each Student and the levels of each Student's strength and weakness.
- Support and assist Students to live comfortably within a foreign environment.
- Respect the Student's right to privacy whilst realising that privacy does not equate to isolation.
- Acknowledge the significance of culture, customs, language and beliefs in the life of their Student and accommodate appropriately for these within the family's life.
- Assist, support and nurture where needed or requested, but keeping in mind that a desire to please may be interpreted as interfering by the Student.
- Provide a safe environment which will offer the Student positive experiences while living as a member of an Australian family and engaging in positive study habits.
- Provide the Student with a private, clean and warm bedroom, good healthy food, laundry facilities and a supportive environment.
- Offer help, guidance, support and encouragement with language practice, studies, planning leisure activities and adapting to living in Australia (this may require patience and empathy and a willingness to show the Student more than once).
- Provide an orientation within the family home e.g.; use of pool area and house facilities and security. Applicable house rules should be explained e.g. what time dinner is, telephone protocols, rules regarding smoking, alcohol, guests visiting, curfews, household tasks and bathroom conduct.
- Offer sincere interest in the cultural background of the Student.
- Respect the Student's need for privacy and allow them space to be alone.
- Have a duty of care towards the Homestay Student.
- Provide three meals per day and snacks (unless otherwise required).
- Only provide single room accommodation. A Student is not to share a room with another Student nor with a member of the family, unless specifically requested.
- Liaise with the Homestay Coordinator regarding any concerns or difficulties.
- Notify the Homestay Coordinator of any change of circumstances in the household.

- Be responsive to the cultural differences and beliefs of the Homestay Student by allowing the Student to continue familiar cultural practices without criticism.
- To adhere to guidelines set down by the Homestay Program and attendance at the Homestay Hosts' information sessions.

Living with a Parent or Guardian

If the student is coming with their parent or guardian, they may apply for a Student Guardian Visa. Please refer to www.homeaffairs.gov.au for more information on how to obtain this visa. It is important to note that if parents are obtaining a Student Guardian Visa, they must be aware of the following:

Student Guardian Visa Holders - Entering and leaving Australia

If you need to leave Australia without the student, you must provide us with evidence that:

- *there are compassionate or compelling reasons for doing so, and*
- *you have made suitable alternative arrangements for the student's accommodation, general welfare and support until you return.*

The alternative arrangements must be approved by us and the student's education provider.

Discuss your circumstances with the education provider as soon as you know you need to travel.

There are two ways you can make alternative welfare arrangements:

- 1. Nominate an alternative student guardian who must be, except in limited circumstances, a parent or relative aged 21 years or over. To do this, use [Form 157N Nomination of a student guardian](#). This form outlines documentation you need to provide when nominating a student guardian. Send this form, the education provider's approval (in a letter or email) and the required documentation to your nearest office before you leave Australia.*
- 2. The student's education provider can take responsibility for the student's welfare by issuing a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter which will state the start and end dates for approval of welfare arrangements.*

We will tell you if the alternative welfare arrangements have been approved. If we decide that the welfare arrangements are not suitable, you cannot leave Australia without your nominating student(s).

If you need to leave Australia permanently and your student needs to continue to study, new welfare arrangements must be approved.

If you do not comply with the conditions of your Student Guardian visa (subclass 590), your visa might be cancelled, and we could also cancel the nominating student's visa.

Services

Telephones

Calling Emergency Services

DIAL 000

In Australia dial **000** from any phone for **fire, police or ambulance** services. **112** may also be dialled from mobile phones. Dialling **112** will override key locks on mobile phones and therefore save time. Emergency Services operators answer this number quickly and to save time will say, "Police, Fire, or Ambulance". If you are unsure of what emergency service you need tell the operator what the emergency is. You will then be connected to the appropriate service to assist. It is wise to think ahead with the most important information which will help them to respond.

Where you are; (note street names and the closest intersection), what has happened and to whom; what their condition is. The operator may then ask you to stay on the phone until the emergency services arrive. In life threatening situations the operator may also give you some instructions to assist until the emergency unit arrives. If you are concerned about your English, remain calm and work with the operators who are very experienced with all cultures. (See also: Health – Emergencies)

Public Telephones

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

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

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

Making Phone Calls within Australia

To make international phone calls:

☎ Dial – international access code (0011) + the country code + the area code (if required) + phone number (when adding a country code to a number, any leading 0 (zero) on the area code following it is NOT dialled)

- **To make domestic phone calls:**

- ☎ Dial – the area code + phone number

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



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

Calling Australia from Overseas

To contact Australia, first dial the international access code from that country (this will vary in each country), then Australia's country code prefix **(61)** followed by the area code without the first zero (for instance Sydney would be 2 instead of 02), and then dial the required number.

Example: International access number +61 2 9999 3662

Mobile/Cell Phones

Before bringing your mobile phone to Australia check with the Australian Communications and Media Authority www.acma.gov.au to make sure it can operate here. Some countries, such as Japan and the USA, use mobile phone networks that are not available in Australia. If not, you can

buy your mobile phone in Australia. Australian telecommunications providers offer a wide range of services which provide a mobile phone within the cost of using that service. There are many differences to the services provided. You should understand what deal you are accepting before signing a contract with a provider. For a comparison of mobile phone plans in Australia see: <http://www.mobiles.com.au/mobile-phone-plans/>

Computer & Internet Access

Many of the above companies will also provide you with internet access. In fact, you may be able to make arrangements with a company where you can get cheaper rates if you have internet and mobile phone through the one service provider. In addition, with providers Telstra and Optus, you could get a packaged deal for your home phone, internet and mobile phone.

Your homestay family may also have a computer you are able to access. It is important to ask the rule of usage e.g. how long you can be on the computer for etc.

Students also have access to computers in the College Library and Computer Labs. Off campus, students can visit a public library to use computer with internet access.

Australia Post

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

Support Groups

For information, please refer to the Cairns Community Guide located at <http://www.communityguide.com.au/community.cfm?cairns/cat/communitygroups>

Getting Around

Public Transport

The local bus system is excellent, cheap and will get you anywhere you want to go. For timetables, please go to http://www.sunbus.com.au/sit_timetable_cairns.htm

There is no public rail system in Cairns.

Taxis

Black & White Taxis service the Cairns area and the most efficient way to arrange for a taxi is to phone 131 008 and make a booking. Please be aware that taking Taxi's can be expensive.

Bicycles

Queensland law requires that everyone must wear a helmet when riding a bike. Helmets help protect bike riders from head injuries and can save lives. When buying a helmet it must:

- have the Australian Standards mark –TM AS 2063, AS/NZS 2063
- fit firmly and comfortably on the person's head and shouldn't be able to move in any direction
- have adjustable straps so there is no slack when they are fastened.

Helmets come in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours and some will fit better than others. A correctly fitted and securely adjusted helmet should not move. A helmet that does not fit correctly is unsafe and it may move or slip off in a fall or crash.

(Source: QLD Transport)

Shopping

Where to Shop

Cairns has six major shopping centres at Smithfield, Redlynch Central, Mount Sheridan, Cairns City, Raintrees, Westcourt and Earlville, in addition to the central business district. Supermarkets include Coles, Woolworths, IGA and Bilo. Local produce such as fruit and vegetables can also be obtained from the numerous markets in and around Cairns (particularly Rusty's on Grafton St). Fast food outlets are also available.

Business Hours

Each shopping centre has various opening hours, however most are generally open from Monday to Saturday from 9am to 5.30pm, Sunday from 10.30am to 4pm. Check with each store for trading hours on public holidays. If you are unsure, it would be prudent to check with the store before you leave home.

Bargaining/Haggling

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

If you are paying by **CASH** and, if you are buying more than one item, you may have more **bargaining power**. Begin the bargaining process by asking: ***"What's the best price you can give me?"***

Or at a garage sale, you might pick up several items whose combined total is \$50 and say: ***"I'll offer you \$30 for all of these."***

Purchasing an Item

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

Yellow Pages

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

Health

Emergencies – Dial 000

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

Police

In Australia police protect people and properties, detect and prevent crime, and preserve peace for everyone. They are not connected to the military or politics. The police can help you feel safe. In a **non-emergency situation** you can contact the local police station directly on: 4057 1900

Fire

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

Ambulance

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

State Emergency Service

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

Lifeline

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

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

Poisons Information Line

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

Emergency Translation

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

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

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

How do I get OSHC?

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

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:

https://www.privatehealth.gov.au/health_insurance/overseas/overseas_student_health_cover.htm

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

What am I covered for?

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

If you elect for Freshwater Christian College to arrange your Overseas Student Health Cover, the provider will be *Medibank Private* under the *Essentials OSHC* cover. Please refer to Medibank Private <http://www.medibank.com.au/Overseas-Students/About-OSHC.aspx#whatcovered> for what is covered.

How do I use my OSHC card?

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

Renewal information

If you have elected to establish your own cover then the responsibility of renewal is yours. If your provider is establishing your cover, then they will ensure your cover is renewed as required.

Types of Health Care in Australia

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

Public System

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

Private System

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

Attending an Australian Hospital

Few private hospitals have emergency departments, so, in an emergency, most Australians rely on the public hospital system. If you attend an Emergency Department in a hospital you will be attended to immediately by a triage nurse for information about you, your cover, and your current health condition. The triage nurse will determine the urgency of your condition in comparison to others in need in the emergency room and it is likely that you will remain at the emergency room for several hours.

Whether you are seen immediately by a Doctor, or have to wait, it is customary to keep you in the emergency room for several hours to monitor your condition before releasing you to go home, or admitting you to hospital in more severe cases.

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

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

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

General Practitioners (GPs)

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

Medical Services

What do I do if I'm sick?

Choose a doctor from the list of medical facilities in this handbook or use the Yellow Pages and phone the GP's surgery or medical centre to make an appointment. If you have woken in the morning feeling unwell and would like to see a doctor that day, you will need to phone the doctor's surgery early in the morning (8:00am – 8:30am) for an appointment. Please note however, that it may not be possible to get an appointment on the same day - you may have to wait one or two days before you can see a doctor (in some regional areas of Australia it may be a week or two before you can get an appointment).

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

Seeing a Doctor

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

Public Hospital Waiting Times

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

recommended treatment. It is the same for all patients – international students and Australian citizens alike.

Pharmacies

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

Prescription Medication

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

Over-the-Counter Medication

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

Dental and Optical

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

Interpreter Services

We are lucky in Australia to have a variety of healthcare professionals from many different cultural backgrounds, so you may be able to see a doctor who speaks your first language. However, if you are having difficulties communicating with your doctor, the **Translation and Interpreter Service (TIS)** can be used. For more information visit www.homeaffairs.gov.au or phone 131 45

Medical Facilities in Cairns

Hospitals

Cairns Base Hospital (Public) - The Esplanade, Cairns Ph: 4226 0000

Cairns Private Hospital - Upward Street, Cairns Ph: 4052 5200

Medical Centres

The Cairns 24 Hour Medical Centre, Cnr Grafton & Florence Street, City Ph: 4052 1119

Redlynch Medical Centre, Redlynch Shopping Centre, Larsen Road, Redlynch Ph: 4039 1255

The Doctors Mulgrave Road Medical Centre, 318 Mulgrave Road, Cairns Ph: 1300 783 048
(*Japanese interpreters*)

X-ray

Cairns X-ray, 318 Mulgrave Road, Cairns Ph: 4052 8700

Pathology

QML, Cairns Day Surgery Building, Cnr Grafton & Florence Streets, Cairns Ph: 4046 1505

Pharmacies

Terry White Chemists, Cairns Central Shopping Centre, McLeod Street, Cairns Ph:
4031 8855

Redlynch Shopping Centre, Larsen Road, Redlynch Ph:
4039 3266

Priceline Pharmacy, Raintrees Shopping Centre, Koch Street, Manunda Ph: 4053 3064

Additional Medical Centres, X-ray, Pathology and Pharmacies listings can be found in the Yellow Pages Directory or at www.yellow.com.au

Inclusion in this Student Handbook is NOT an endorsement of a particular company or business.

General Health

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

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

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

(Source: Education Abroad Program, UCLA)

Mental Health

Living in a new culture can be stressful and difficult. If you feel lonely or stressed, talk to friends or College staff. For more serious issues, your GP or medical health centre are able to refer you to professionals who can help. You can also contact Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre on 1800 188 189.

Homesickness and cultural adjustment

It is very normal to feel homesick - most people who travel experience it at some stage. It can be triggered by different things, such as food, smells, music, lifestyle or just missing family and friends. Homesickness can be experienced at different periods and for different lengths of time. It can make you frustrated, depressed or angry. This can affect your studies and how you react with your classmates.

If you feel homesick, talk to somebody about your feelings. Make sure you keep in contact with family and friends. You might even join a multicultural club or visit an ethnic supermarket. Remember, you are here to experience and enjoy a new and different culture!

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

While you are studying, make sure you eat and drink well. Drink plenty of water through the day and eat a balanced diet of fruit and vegetables. Students can spend a lot of time indoors studying, so you might want to find a sport or hobby to help you get lots of exercise.

- Exercise** – do at least 30mins of moderate exercise a day
- Sleep** – get at least 8-9 hours of sleep a night
- Nutrition** – keep a balanced diet remembering to eat lots of vegetables and fruit everyday

Dental, optical and alternative therapies

Dental, optical and alternative therapies are not covered by your OSHC and may be expensive compared to your home country. Some are listed below or you can look in the Yellow Pages telephone directory or online to find one convenient to you.

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Acupuncture | Annette Donnan, 449 Draper Street, Cairns Ph: 4031 2100 Colin Charnley, Unit 8, 92-96 Pease Street, Manunda, Ph: 4032 1977 |
| Aromatherapy | Shady Grove, PO Box 195, Herberton, 4887, Ph: 4096 2570 |
| Traditional Chinese Medicine | Chinese Natural Health Clinic, 3 Thomas Street, North Cairns Ph: 4051 3713 |
| Chiropractic | Cairns Day and Night Chiropractors, 186 Mulgrave Road, Cairns Ph: 4051 2729 Chiropractic Works, Cairns Central Shopping Centre Ph: 4031 3388 |
| Homeopathy | Jude Friesen, Cnr McLeod & James Streets, North Cairns Ph: 0402 857 799 |
| Massage | All About Health, 94 Mansfield Street, Earlville, Ph: 4054 2441 At Ease Natural Therapies, 134 Grafton Street, Cairns, Ph: 4031 7738 |
| Meditation | Sahaja Yoga Meditation, Ph: 1300 724 252 |
| Naturopathy | Balancing Mind, Body and Soul, 37 Mason Street, Stratford Ph: 4032 4265 Iridologist Naturopath, Ph: 4068 7152 |
| Yoga | The Yoga Centre, 129 Mulgrave Road, Cairns Ph: 4031 9445 Cairns Yoga Academy, Edge Hill Ph: 0413 942 938 |

Additional listings can be found in the Yellow Pages Directory or at www.yellow.com.au

Inclusion in this Student Handbook is NOT an endorsement of a particular company or business.

Managing my Finances:

Setting up a Bank Account

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

To open a bank account you will need:

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

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

Bank & ATM Locations in Cairns

| BANK | WEBSITE | LOCAL ADDRESS |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| National Australia Bank | www.nab.com.au | Corner of Smithfield Shopping Centre and Cnr Cook & Kennedy Hwys, Smithfield, QLD 4878 |
| ANZ | www.anz.com.au | Cnr Captain Cook & Kennedy Highways Smithfield QLD 4878 |
| Commonwealth Bank | www.commbank.com.au | 473 - 475 Mulgrave Rd Earlville Cairns, QLD 4870 |
| Westpac Bank | www.westpac.com.au | |
| St George Bank | www.stgeorge.com.au | 19 Aplin Street, Cairns QLD 4870 |
| Credit Union Australia | www.cua.com.au | Shop 118 Cairns Central Shopping Centre Cnr Spence & McLeod St |

(NB – this list is just a sample of some financial institutions in Australia)

Bank & ATM Locations near My Accommodation

(Student to complete)

Banking Hours

Most bank branches are open from **Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:00pm** (except on public holidays). Some branches have extended trading hours during the week and may be open Saturdays (check with your individual bank). **ATMs remain open 24 hours a day.** However, you

should be aware of your personal safety if accessing cash from an ATM at night in quiet areas where there are not a lot of people around.

Bank Fees

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

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

Accessing Money from My Account

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

ATMs (Automatic 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 bank's ATMs. Fees for using ATMs can vary between banks and between accounts. See also: Using an ATM.

EFTPOS

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

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

Telephone Banking

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

Internet Banking

Internet banking allows you to view and check your accounts, review recent transactions, apply for loans and credit cards, or transfer money and pay bills – all on-line. Most banks offer Internet banking facilities, but you will need to register with your bank to gain access. You will then be

given a password that allows you to use your accounts on-line. Never give this password to anyone else.

There are security issues that need to be considered when using Internet banking. It is recommended that you install and keep up-to-date anti-virus software and a firewall, update security patches and be suspicious of emails requesting you to hand over confidential information such as your Internet banking logon password.

Your bank will never ask you for this information, especially in an email. In addition, many banks publish security guides on their websites and this provides important information on precautions that you can take to protect your information on-line. If you are unsure about any approach that appears to be from your bank to provide personal information. Refuse to provide that information until you can attend your nearest branch to discuss the request over the counter with bank staff. There is no charge for discussing your banking options at a branch.

Over-the-Counter Service

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

Paying Bills

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

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

Account Statements

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

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

(Source: Australian Bankers' Association Inc.)

Using an ATM

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

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

- Minimise your time at the ATM by having your card ready when you approach the machine;
- Take a look around as you approach the ATM and if there's anything suspicious, don't use the machine at that time (report any suspicions to the police);
- If you don't feel comfortable using a particular ATM, consider continuing on to another branch or using off-street ATMs;
- Do remember that EFTPOS can be used to withdraw cash at many other places, like supermarkets and service stations;
- If you simply want to check your account balance or transfer funds between accounts, telephone or Internet banking can be used instead of an ATM.

If your ATM or credit card is lost or stolen (or if your PIN has been revealed to another person), notify your bank immediately. This will enable your bank to put a stop on your card immediately so that no one else can use it and get access to your money.

Most banks have a 24-hour telephone number for reporting lost cards – it's a good idea to keep a record of this number handy at all times, just in case. If you don't know the number, ask your bank.

(Source: Australian Bankers' Association Inc.)

Safety When Carrying Money

The first and fundamental rule of safety when carry money is:

"Don't carry large amounts of cash!"

The second is:

"Don't advertise the fact that you are carrying money!"

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

Working in Australia

Permission to Work

From 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 will confirm your study commencement. Your

education provider may do this automatically on the first official day of classes, or you may need to request that they do.

Working While Studying

1. You are not permitted to start work until you have commenced your course of study
2. You can work a maximum of 20 hours per week during the term and unlimited hours when your course is **not in session**. **You must consider the effect on your studies if you choose to work**. Although you may be permitted to work up to 20 hours per week this may impact on your studies. We recommend between 10 and 15 hours only.
3. The Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) 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.

(Source: Department of Home Affairs (Immigration))

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

www.homeaffairs.gov.au

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

Online - try these online companies:

www.seek.com.au

www.careerone.com.au

www.mycareer.com.au

<https://www.jobsearch.com.au/>

Earning an Income

Taxes

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, 8am to 6pm 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 www.ato.gov.au
- For a registered tax agent visit 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% of your wage into a superannuation (pension) account for you. In most cases, you can access your contributions when you leave Australia permanently, although the contributions will be taxed.

To check your eligibility to claim your superannuation and to apply for your payment, visit: 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 and are arrested and need to attend a court appearance, you will need legal representation to negotiate Australia's complex legal system. The link below will provide a listing for some of the many legal services in Cairns.

<https://www.yellowpages.com.au/find/legal-support-referral-services/cairns-qld-4870>

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Child Protection Laws

Every student has the right to feel safe and free from harm while at school or at home. We expect you to respect your teachers and other students and we expect that you will receive the same respect in return. You should **never** allow yourself to feel unsafe without reporting it to someone you trust.

Harm refers to:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Emotional deprivation
- Psychological abuse
- Physical neglect and/or inadequate supervision
- Sexual abuse or exploitation

Who should I tell if I am not feeling safe at school or at home?

Any forms of harm are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If you are experiencing harm or if you believe you are likely to experience any form of harm, then you should report the matter to either:

- Your teacher
- The Chaplain – Ms Carla
- The Director of Pastoral Care – Mr Anderson
- College Counsellor – Mrs Wendy Smith
- The Head of Primary – Mr Natoli
- The Head of Secondary – Mr Schwarz
- The Principal – Mr Holtam, or
- Any other member of staff

If you do not feel like talking to a member of staff you may like to write him or her letter.

What will happen if I report what is happening to a member a staff?

If the concern is worrying you but not causing you immediate harm, then the member of staff will discuss with you ways to solve your problem. If the concern is serious and the member of staff believes that you are being harmed or in danger of being harmed, he or she will report it to the Principal.

What if I don't want the member of staff to tell the Principal?

The member of staff will try to keep your concerns confidential as much as possible. However, if the member of staff is aware or reasonably suspects that harm has been caused by anyone to a student of the College then the law says that the matter must be reported to the Principal and it may have to be reported to the Police. If the staff member has no choice about reporting what you have told them to some-one else, he or she will explain to you exactly what will happen next.

Remember the most important thing is that you feel safe and free from harm. You must tell someone if you are being harmed or are afraid that you will be harmed.

(Source: Student Diary)

Home Security

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

Some General Security Tips:

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

Internet Safety & Security

Internet Access on Arrival

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

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

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

(Source: Australian Communications and Media Authority)

Personal Safety

When you are out and about it is important to be alert and aware of your personal safety.

If you are **going out at night** remember:

- Think ahead - consider how you are going to get home - what about pre-booking a taxi or arranging transport with a friend or family member?
- Never hitch-hike.
- Make sure that you stay with your party and that someone knows where you are at all times.
- Make sure you have enough money to get home or to phone.
- Keep away from trouble - if you see any trouble or suspect that it might be about to start - move away from the scene if you can. The best thing you can do is to alert the police and keep away.
- Walk purposely and try to appear confident. Be wary of casual requests from strangers, like someone asking for a cigarette or change - they could have ulterior motives.
- Try not to carry your wallet in your back trouser pocket where it is vulnerable and in clear view.

If you are **out and about**:

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

(Source: Australian Federal Police)

Public Transport Safety

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

Buses

Waiting for a bus:

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

Riding on the bus:

- Sit as close to the bus driver as possible
- Stay alert and be aware of the people around you

- If someone bothers you, change seats and tell the driver
- Keep your purse/packages close by your side. Keep your wallet inside a front coat pocket
- Check your purse/wallet if someone is jostling, crowding or pushing you
- If you see any suspicious activity, inform the driver

Taxis

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

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

If the driver harasses you when travelling in a taxi your options include:

- Ask the driver to stop. You may choose to make up an excuse to do so;
 - Leave the taxi when it stops at a traffic sign or lights
 - Call out to someone on the street to attract attention and seek assistance. This may also cause the driver to stop
 - Read out the fleet number and advise the driver you will report him/her if they don't stop
- (Source: Queensland Police Service)

Road Rules

All Freshwater Christian College international students must first obtain permission from the Principal of Freshwater Christian College to drive a vehicle. In the event permission is granted, the student must obtain a Queensland Drivers Licence, even if you have been issued a drivers licence in your home country.

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

Owning a Car

Registration:

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

Insurance:

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

Speed

There are very obvious reasons for having speeding and traffic rules. The risk of being involved in an accident increases with the speed a vehicle is being driven because there is less time to react, less control of the vehicle and the distance needed to stop is longer. The higher the speed a vehicle is travelling when it hits a pedestrian, the greater the chance of a fatality occurring. **Speed kills.**

Mobile Phones and Driving

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

Demerit Points Scheme

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

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

(Source: Roads and Traffic Authority, NSW)

Licence Requirements

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

You remain a temporary overseas visitor

Your overseas licence remains current

You have not been disqualified from driving in that State or elsewhere and

You have not had your licence suspended or cancelled or your visiting driver privileges withdrawn.

(Source: Roads and Traffic Authority, NSW)

Hitchhiking

A person who waves at unknown drivers from the side of the road to request a ride with a driver further along the road is called a Hitchhiker. **Hitchhiking is illegal** in Queensland and Victoria.

Elsewhere in Australia it is illegal to hitchhike on motorways (where pedestrians are prohibited and where cars are not allowed to stop). Some travel companies promote hitchhiking as an inexpensive means of travelling around Australia.

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

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

Avoiding Dangerous Areas and Activities

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

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

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

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

A school between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm is usually lively and active. After 5 pm or during school holidays however, it may be isolated or dominated by particular groups of people.

Being in a place when it is busy is very different from when the place is isolated. There is often no reason to be afraid, But – be alert, be aware, and be careful.

Making New Friends

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 socialising 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 but certain **precautions** may make it more difficult for a possible perpetrator:

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

What do I do if I am assaulted?

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

1. From a **public phone or mobile phone**, ring the police on **000**.
2. Do not wash, shower, change clothes or clean up in any way until after talking to the police and going to the hospital. You could destroy vital evidence. Don't drink alcohol or take tranquillisers or other drugs as you will have to give a clear account of what has happened. Try to remember everything you can about your attacker.
3. Remember, **you are the victim**. You have nothing to feel guilty or ashamed about. Police officers are aware that a person who has been assaulted, sexually or otherwise, is likely to be suffering from emotional shock. They will do all they can to make things as easy as possible for you. It is likely they will provide a female police officer for a female victim. If not, you have the right to request one. You can also ask the police to contact a friend, family member, interpreter or religious adviser to be in attendance with you when you are dealing with the circumstances surrounding the report of assault.
4. Phone the International Student Officer on 0419 190 376 for immediate assistance.

Contacts

Sexual Assault After Hours Crisis Line – 1800 010 120
Child Safety After Hours Service – 1800 177 135
Cairns Base Hospital Emergency Department – 4226 0000
Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800

Section 4 - Studying at Freshwater Christian College

To Begin

Arrive early

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

Arriving early to attend orientation gives you the chance to;

- See and talk to the most important people you will need to know at the institution.
 - International Student Officer and their duties
 - Accommodation/Homestay Coordinator
 - Heads of School
 - Administration and support staff
 - Chaplain
 - Counsellor
- Meet and get advice from your Head of School
- Find your way around the campus
 - Library
 - Computer rooms and facilities
 - Recreation and eating areas
 - Classrooms
- Meet other International students who may share your classes, share your concerns or fears. Knowing another face on campus as you become more comfortable with the routines can really help you avoid any feelings of isolation.
- Find your way around the public transport/City/ to and from your accommodation.
- Feel as though you already know some of the things local students know before you get to meet them at orientation activities later.

What to Do First

Report to College Reception and meet the International Student Officer.

International Student Orientation

This will be done when you arrive.

International Student Behaviour

Students must abide with the College's Behaviour Management Policy and is available in this handbook, the Student Diary or from College Reception.

Academic Policies & Procedures

Details can be found at in the Student Diary issued to you on commencement.

Student Contact Details and Change of Contact Details

The student (and, if the student is under 18 years of age, the student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and any adult responsible for the student's welfare) is required to notify the school of contact details, including:

- i) current residential address
- ii) mobile number (if any)
- iii) email address (if any)
- iv) who to contact in any emergency, and
- v) if there are any changes to those details, within 7 days of the change.

This is a requirement under the 2018 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students. It is also a requirement under the student's visa conditions to ensure that any notifications sent to the student by the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) and Border Protection advising of visa breaches are sent to the student's current address.

Where Freshwater Christian College has approved the student's welfare and accommodation arrangements, the student requires both the school's and the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of the overseas student's approval for any changes to welfare and accommodation arrangements. It is also a Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) requirement a written agreement is in place.

The school is required by law to request confirmation of current address and contact details in writing for each student (and parent or legal guardian if a student is under 18 years of age) and emergency contact details at least every six months.

Welfare and Accommodation Policy v7

Care for younger students under 18 years

Freshwater Christian College is a CRICOS-registered provider which enrolls younger students under 18 years of age. As part of its registration obligations Freshwater Christian College must satisfy Commonwealth and State legislation, as well as any other regulatory requirements, relating to child welfare and protection for any overseas student enrolled who is under 18 years of age.

These obligations include ensuring that all overseas students under 18 years of age are given age- and culturally-appropriate information on:

- who to contact in emergency situations, including contact number/s of a nominated staff member, and
- how to seek assistance and report any incident or allegation involving actual or alleged sexual, physical or other abuse.

Freshwater Christian College has documented procedures relating to child welfare and safety, and will implement these procedures in the event that there are any concerns for the welfare of a student under 18 years of age.

Accommodation and care options for overseas students under 18 years

Freshwater Christian College approves the following accommodation and care options for overseas students:

1. The student will live with a parent or relative approved by the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration).

In this case:

- a. The School does **not** provide a welfare letter (CAAW) via PRISMS. The student's family completes Form 157N and provides proof of relationship to Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) at the time of visa application for approval of these arrangements. The Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) must also approve any further change of welfare arrangements.
- b. If the adult responsible for the welfare, accommodation and other support arrangements for a student under 18 years holds a [Student guardian Visa \(subclass 590\)](#), all obligations and conditions of this visa must be met, including:
 - o not leaving Australia without the nominating student unless there are compassionate and compelling circumstances and the School has first approved alternative welfare and accommodation arrangements for the student for the adult's period of absence, and
 - o advising the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) of any change of address, passport or other changes of circumstances.

Freshwater Christian College requires holders of Student Guardian Visas to:

- c. maintain Overseas Visitor Health Cover for themselves and any dependent children living with them in Australia
- d. immediately advise the School of any change to address or contact details
- e. immediately advise the School if there are any compassionate or compelling reasons to travel overseas or not be at home for an extended period of time to care for the student.

If there is a valid reason for travelling overseas, and the School is able to approve alternative accommodation and care arrangements for the student for the period of student guardian visa holder's absence, the School will provide documentation approving temporary care arrangements for the student to the student's guardian and for the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) via PRISMS.

If there is not a valid reason for travelling overseas, or if the School is not able to approve alternative accommodation and care arrangements for the student for the period of student guardian visa holder's absence, the student will need to travel overseas with the holder of the student guardian visa. In this case, the School will advise if compulsory attendance requirements will or will not be affected by the student's absence.

2. The student will live in school approved accommodation and care arrangements and Freshwater Christian College will generate the welfare letter (CAAW) via PRISMS to accompany the student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).

Accommodation options that may be approved by Freshwater Christian College for full fee paying 500 (formerly 571) visa subclass students under 18 years of age include:

- a. Homestay Program operated by Freshwater Christian College. Please see Point 6. Additional Information, below.
- b. Private accommodation and care arrangements requested by the parent but approved by the School which meet all requirements under relevant state and commonwealth legislation.

Freshwater Christian College will maintain approval of accommodation and care arrangements until:

- c. The student completes the course and departs Australia
- d. the student turns 18 years
- e. any appeals processes in relation to Freshwater Christian College's intentions to cancel the student's enrolment has been finalised (including suspensions, cancellations, course progress and attendance)
- f. the student has alternative welfare arrangements approved by another registered provider
- g. a parent or nominated relative approved by the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) assumes care of the student
- h. Freshwater Christian College has notified the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) that it is no longer able to approve the student's welfare arrangements and has taken the required action after not being able to contact the student.

Any accommodation, welfare and other support arrangements for the student must be approved by Freshwater Christian College, including arrangements provided by third parties.

Accommodation and care arrangements are checked prior to approval and at least every six months thereafter to ensure they are appropriate to the student's age and needs.

Any adults involved in or providing accommodation and welfare arrangements to the student have a blue card as appropriate (<https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/>).

Any changes to approved arrangements must also be approved by Freshwater Christian College. This includes any requests by students to attend "Schoolies Week" on completion of Year 12.

If a student cannot be located and the School has concerns for his/her welfare, the School will contact the student's parents/legal guardian and notify the police and any other relevant authorities.

If a student for whom Freshwater Christian College has issued a CAAW refuses to maintain approved arrangements, the School will report this to the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) and advise the student to contact the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) to ensure visa implications are understood. <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/contact-us>

In the event of a significant or critical welfare issue involving the student, and if determined necessary by the school, a parent, legal guardian or approved relative agrees to travel to a designated location within 4 days to assume care of the student until the situation has been resolved to the school's satisfaction.

3. For School vacation periods, students under 18 years of age for whom Freshwater Christian College has issued a CAAW will:

- a. return home to parents, or
- b. continue to live in/is placed in Homestay arranged and approved by the school, or
- c. apply for approval to spend the vacation with relatives or a friend's family, or

- d. apply to attend a supervised excursion/camp etc, if all requirements are met in order to attain school approval.

4. Accommodation options for students 18 years and older include:

- a. Homestay Program operated by Freshwater Christian College. Please see Point 6. Additional Information, below
- b. Private accommodation and care arrangements requested by the parent but approved by the School.
- c. any changes to approved arrangements must also be approved by the School. This includes any requests by students to attend “Schoolies Week” on completion of Year 12.

5. For School vacation periods, the following accommodation options are available to students 18 years or older:

- a. return home to parents, or
- b. continue to live in/is placed in Homestay arranged and approved by the school, or
- c. apply for approval to spend the vacation with relatives or a friend’s family, or
- d. apply to attend a supervised excursion/camp etc., if all requirements are met in order to attain school approval.

6. Additional Information for Homestay/Private Accommodation arrangements at Freshwater Christian College:

The Homestay/private accommodation arrangements operated by Freshwater Christian College meets Queensland legislative requirements for child protection as well as Standard 5 of the 2018 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students.

These include:

- a. Continuous dates for approved welfare arrangements;
- b. Documented procedures for checking suitability of accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements before a student is placed in an approved arrangement, and at least every six months thereafter, covering;
 - o Guidelines for selecting, screening and monitoring each family and ensuring the family can provide age appropriate care and facilities for the duration of the student’s enrolment at the school; and
 - o Criteria about accommodation services to be provided, and contract for arrangements about providing accommodation services;
- c. Orientation program for families new to the provision of homestay services;
- d. Compliant Homestay risk management strategy, reviewed annually, undertaken by the school;
- e. Blue Cards as required for adults (over 18yo) living in the homestay/private arrangement other than overseas students, or who otherwise have regular contact with the student.

Behaviour Management Policy v2.1

The Behaviour Management Policy aims to set in place the procedure and guidelines whereby students and teachers are able to work in this environment free from disruption, abuse or threat and within which they can reach their potential as teachers and learners.

At Freshwater Christian College, we believe that for effective learning to take place we need to create a safe, supportive and disciplined environment that respects the following rights:

- Students have the right to learn
- Teachers have the right to teach
- Everyone has the right to be safe

There is an expectation that students obey all of the rules of the College and be aware of the consequences should they choose to disregard them. The College may suspend or terminate enrolment at its discretion for failure to comply with these conditions or other breaches of the College's rules and regulations. Such termination may be for a singular serious incident or for failure over a period of time to correct repetitive less serious breaches.

We record infringements daily and the consequences for non-compliance are as follows: (within a five-week period)

The BLUE Behaviour Management Program

- B Behaviour
- L Late (to school or class)
- U Uniform (Formal uniform to be worn except on sports days) + hat to be worn each day
- E Equipment (ensure the correct equipment has been brought to school and/or each class)

3 of the 1 type of offence = an after school detention. This resets every 5 weeks.

No hat = No play. It is a sun safe issue.

Student Code of Conduct

All students at the College are expected to abide by the following which is signed and agreed to at enrolment and found in the College Diary published annually.

1. Obey all the rules of the College as set out in the College issued student diary. In particular, whilst at school I will at all times:
 - Wear correct uniform in a manner which is neat and tidy;
 - Speak and behave toward all staff members in a respectful and courteous manner, and accept appropriate disciplinary action where deemed necessary.
2. Out of school I will act at all times in a manner that will set an example of behaviour that is consistent with the values of the College community, eg; not using illegal substances such as drugs or alcohol, nor being involved with pornographic material, or involved in such activities as cyber bullying.
3. In relation to my school work, I will at all times seek to achieve my potential and endeavour to submit assignments by the due date.
4. In relation to any part time work outside of school, I will ensure that hours worked do not infringe upon my ability to complete my school work.

I understand that failure to abide by the code of conduct will put my continuing enrolment at Freshwater Christian College in jeopardy and that enrolment may be terminated for a single serious breach or for the failure to rectify over time less serious breaches.

As a student of this Christian school, I pledge to uphold the College's standard against inappropriate language/swearing, gambling, drinking alcohol, having anything to do with drugs/substances, and will act in a very orderly and respectful manner.

I will uphold the Christian standard of politeness, kindness and honesty. I will try to be of unquestionable character in dress, conduct and other areas of my life.

I agree to abide by the above standards of conduct and other rules expected of each student enrolled in this Christian College while I am a student attending the College, and will uphold the reputation of Freshwater Christian College at all times.

Complaints and Appeals Policy v8

A copy of this policy will be provided to the student (or parent(s)/legal guardian if the student is under 18) at a reasonable time prior to a written agreement being signed and again during orientation or within 7 days of the commencement of student attendance of the enrolled course.

1. Purpose

- a) The purpose of Freshwater Christian College's Complaints and Appeals Policy is to provide a student or parent(s)/legal guardian with the opportunity to access procedures to facilitate the resolution of a dispute or complaint involving Freshwater Christian College, or an education agent or third party engaged by Freshwater Christian College to deliver a service on behalf of Freshwater Christian College.
- b) The internal complaints and appeals processes are conciliatory and non-legal.

2. Complaints against other students

- a) Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the school's Grievance Policy.

3. Informal Complaints Resolution

- a) In the first instance, Freshwater Christian College requests there is an attempt to informally resolve the issue through mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- b) Students should contact the student's teacher in the first instance to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- c) If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, the matter will be referred to the Principal and Freshwater Christian College's internal formal complaints and appeals handling procedure will be followed.

4. Formal Internal Complaints Handling and Appeals Process

- a) The process of this complaints and appeals procedure is confidential and any complaints or appeals are a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints handling process.
- b) The student must notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint or appeal.
- c) Written complaints or appeals are to be lodged with the Principal.
- d) Where the internal complaints and appeals process is being accessed because the student has received notice by the school that the school intends to report him/her for unsatisfactory course attendance, unsatisfactory course progress or suspension or cancellation of enrolment, the student has 20 working days from the date of receipt of notification in which to lodge a written appeal.

- e) Complaints and appeals processes are available to students at no cost.
- f) Each complainant has the opportunity to present his/her case to the Principal.
- g) Students and/or the school may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at all relevant meetings.
- h) The formal complaints and appeals process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint or appeal with the Principal and will be finalised within 20 working days, or as soon as practicable.
- i) For the duration of the internal complaints and appeals process the student's enrolment will be maintained, as required under the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* and the student must continue to attend classes.

However, if the Principal deems that the student's health or well-being, or the well-being of others is at risk he may decide to suspend or cancel the student's enrolment before the complaints and appeals process has been accessed or fully completed. In such cases, the student may still lodge a complaint or appeal, even if the student is offshore.

- j) Once the Principal has come to a decision regarding the complaint or appeal, the student will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome, and a copy will be retained on the student's file.
- k) If the complaints and appeals process finds in favour of the student, Freshwater Christian College will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required, and advise the student of the outcome and action taken.
- m) Where the outcome of a complaint or appeal is not in the student's favour, the school will advise the student within 10 working days of concluding the internal review of the student's right to access the external appeals process.

However, the school is only obliged to await the outcome of an external appeal if the matter relates to a breach of course progress or attendance requirements. For all other issues, the school may take action (including making changes to the student's enrolment status in PRISMS) in accordance with the outcome of the internal appeal.

5. External Appeals Processes

- a) If the student is dissatisfied with the conduct or result of the internal complaints and appeals procedure, he/she may contact and/or seek redress through the Overseas Students Ombudsman at no cost. Please see: <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students> or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.
- b) If the student wishes to appeal a decision made by Freshwater Christian College that relates to being reported for a breach of course progress or attendance requirement (under Standard 8), the student must lodge this appeal with the Overseas Student Ombudsman's office within 10 working days of being notified of the outcome of his/her internal appeal.
- c) If the student wishes to appeal a decision made by Freshwater Christian College that relates to:
 - i) refusal to approve a transfer application (under Standard 7), or
 - ii) suspension or cancellation of the student's enrolment (under Standard 9)
 any choice to lodge an external appeal with the Overseas Student Ombudsman is at the student's discretion. The school need not await the outcome of any external appeal lodged, before implementing the outcome of the internal appeal.

6. Other legal redress

- a) Nothing in the school's Complaints and Appeals Policy negates the right of an overseas student to pursue other legal remedies.

Definitions

Working Day – *any day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday during term time*

Student – *a student enrolled at Freshwater Christian College or the parent(s)/legal guardian of a student where that student is under 18 years of age*

Support person – *for example, a friend/teacher/relative not involved in the grievance/complaint.*

Entry Requirements for Registered Courses Policy v5.1

- 1) Freshwater Christian College will consider enrolment applications from students wishing to apply for a Student Visa commencing in levels Year 1 to Year 9 (age limits apply –see below), subject to compliance with minimum requirements and conditions set by the College, and with legislative requirements of the State of Queensland and the Commonwealth of Australia, including any requirements to undertake extra tuition to learn English to meet the English language proficiency standard needed to enter mainstream classes.
- 2) Applications for enrolment must be made on International Student Enrolment Application form. This must be correctly completed, and must be accompanied by the following documents to support the application:
 - a. Copies of Student Report Cards from the previous 2 years of study, including a copy of the latest Student Report;
 - b. A completed Reference Form from the student’s current or most recent school Principal is also required if student Report Cards do not record student behaviour or commitment to studies;
 - c. A completed Subject Choices Form if appropriate;
 - d. Appropriate proof of identity and age;
 - e. Written evidence of proficiency in English as a second language;
 - f. Photocopy or scanned copy of passport page with name, photo identification, passport number and expiry date;
 - g. Written piece of work in English, eg; story about their family;
 - h. Payment of the Application Fee;
 - i. Letter of Offer from another registered provider, if applicable;
 - j. Completed Homestay application form, if applicable;
 - k. Application to the Queensland Assessment and Curriculum Authority (QCAA) for relaxation of completed Core requirements, if applicable;
- 3) Where the above documents are not in English, certified translations in English are required, with necessary costs to be met by the applicant.
- 4) An application for enrolment can only be processed when all of the above are in the hands of the Enrolments & Community Relations Officer.
- 5) Applications from overseas students are processed according to established policy and procedures, and are dealt with on their merits.
- 6) Assessment procedures include an evaluation of reports from previous schools and of English language proficiency. In cases where report cards are not available or are inconclusive for any reason, the College may require relevant testing of the applicant to assess the application.

- 7) Freshwater Christian College does not accept applications for enrolment from International Students commencing in Prep, Year 10, Year 11 or Year 12.

Freshwater Christian College requires evidence that the applicant’s academic ability and English proficiency is sufficient to successfully meet the entry and curriculum demands of the intended course. This is a requirement under the 2018 National Code of Practice, Part B Standard 2.

Minimum academic and English language requirements are as follows:

Academic Requirements

Students must provide evidence of satisfactory academic performance appropriate to entry to the Year level requested on the Application for Enrolment or offered as an alternative point of entry by the school in a Letter of Offer.

- For Primary School (Year 1 to Year 6) students:
Evidence of application to school work and age-appropriate achievement in literacy and numeracy areas of the curriculum
- For Secondary School (Year 7 to Year 9) students:
A pass level or “C” grade or better for the majority of core subjects

For Secondary School (Year 10) students who are currently enrolled and attending Freshwater Christian College and are continuing enrolment at the College to Senior Secondary (Year 11 and 12):

A pass level or “C” grade or better in Semester 1 and Semester 2 report cards for Year 10 for the majority of core subjects.

English Language Proficiency Requirements

- 8) Applicants are assessed individually based on the contents of their report cards and personal references, and may also be required to undertake a language proficiency test set by the school.
- 9) If supplied, Freshwater Christian College will assess evidence of English language proficiency presented by a student at the time of application, but reserves the right to confirm the student’s English language proficiency through additional tests.
- 10) If not presenting appropriate evidence of English language proficiency at the time of application, Freshwater Christian College will assess the student’s application for entry based on satisfactory test results as follows:

| For Entry to Year | Acceptable Test | Minimum Test Result |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Year 7 Year 8 Year 9 | IELTS (International English Language Testing System) | 5.5 |

Students who are enrolled and attending Freshwater Christian College and are continuing enrolment at the College from Year 10 to Senior School (Year 11 and Year 12) are required

to achieve a pass level or “C” grade or better in the core subject ‘English’ in their Semester 1 and Semester 2 report cards for Year 10.

- 11) Students should note that if their language proficiency is below that outlined above, they may be required to undertake an intensive English language course before beginning mainstream studies.
- 12) If undertaking an intensive English language course before beginning mainstream studies, English language proficiency will be reassessed at the conclusion of the language course to ensure the student’s level of proficiency is sufficient to allow them to commence the mainstream course.
- 13) Students wishing to enter the school below Year 7 level are assessed individually based on the contents of their report cards and personal references, and may also be required to undertake a language proficiency test set by the school.

Age Limits

Students applying for enrolment for entry in Year level’s 1 to 9, must also be:

- Aged 6 years old but less than 7 years old when you begin Year 1
- Less than 8 years old when you begin Year 2
- Less than 9 years old when you begin Year 3
- Less than 10 years old when you begin Year 4
- Less than 11 years old when you begin Year 5
- Less than 12 years old when you begin Year 6
- Less than 13 years old when you begin Year 7
- Less than 14 years old when you begin Year 8
- Less than 15 years old when you begin Year 9

Student Progress, Attendance and Course Duration Policy v9.1

(This policy is available to staff and to students.)

International students are required to meet and maintain satisfactory course progress and attendance requirements under visa condition 8202 and under Standard 8 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

1) Course Progress

- a) The school will monitor, record and assess the course progress of each student for the course in which the student is currently enrolled.
- b) The course progress of all students will be assessed at the end of each study period of enrolment according to Freshwater Christian College’s course assessment requirements.
- c) Students who have begun part way through a study period will be assessed according to Freshwater Christian College’s course assessment requirements after completing one full study period.
- d) To demonstrate satisfactory course progress in any study period.
 - i) For Primary (Prep to Year 6) students will need to achieve a minimum grade of ‘Demonstrating’ (DEM) in at least 50% of subjects in any study period. Students need to be demonstrating that they are improving and making an effort (ie;

- participating in class, displaying a good attitude to learning, completing homework).
- ii) For Junior Secondary (Year 7 to Year 10) students will need to achieve a minimum grade of 'C' in at least 50% of subjects in any study period. Students need to be demonstrating that they are improving and making an effort (ie; participating in class, displaying a good attitude to learning, completing homework).
 - iii) For Senior Secondary (Year 11 to Year 12) students must achieve a Satisfactory in Unit 1 and Unit 2 in Year 11, and in Unit 3 and Unit 4 in Year 12. Students must progressively accrue sufficient credit in Year 11 and Year 12 to remain eligible for a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). Students enrolled in all four Units of a Senior Secondary Course will be identified and notified as being at risk of not achieving satisfactory course progress when their results indicate that the Learning Options available to them to remain eligible for a QCE are becoming limited.
- e) If at the end of a study period a student does not achieve satisfactory course progress as described above, the Enrolments and Community Relations Officer will formally contact the parent(s) to advise the student is at risk of breaching the course progress requirement and there will be a meeting with the student to develop an intervention strategy for academic improvement. This may include;
- i) After-hours tutorial support
 - ii) Subject tutorial support in class time
 - iii) Mentoring
 - iv) Change of subject selection, or reducing course load (without affecting the course duration)
 - v) Counselling – time management
 - vi) Counselling – academic skills
 - vii) Counselling – personal
 - viii) other intervention strategies as deemed necessary
- f) A copy of the student's individual strategy and progress reports in achieving improvement will be forwarded to parents.
- g) The student's individual strategy for academic improvement will be monitored over the following study period by the Head of Primary and/or the Head of Secondary and records of student response to the strategy will be kept. Parents will be kept informed of the student's academic progress while the student is receiving formal intervention.
- h) If the student does not achieve satisfactory course progress by the end of the next study period, the Principal will advise the student in writing of Freshwater Christian College's intention to report the student for breach of visa condition 8202, and that he/she has 20 working days in which to access the school's internal complaints and appeals process. The notification of intention to report will be issued to the student prior to the commencement of the next study period. Following the outcome of the internal process, if the student wishes to complain or lodge an external appeal about a decision made or action taken by Freshwater Christian College, he/she may contact the Overseas Student Ombudsman at no cost. Please see Freshwater Christian College's Complaints and Appeals Policy for further details.
- i) The school will notify the ESOS agency via PRISMS of the student not achieving satisfactory course progress as soon as practicable where:
- i) the student does not access the complaints and appeals process within 20 days, or the student withdraws from the complaints and appeals process by notifying the Principal of Freshwater Christian College in writing; or

- ii) the complaints and appeals process results in a decision in favour of the school.

2) Completion within expected duration of study

- a) As noted in 1.a., the school will monitor, record and assess the course progress of each student for the course in which the student is currently enrolled.
- b) Part of the assessment of course progress at the end of each study period (semester) will include an assessment of whether the student's progress is such that they are expected to complete their studies within the expected duration of the course.
- c) The school will only extend the duration of the student's study where it is clear the student will not complete their course by the expected date because:
 - i) the student can provide evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances (see definitions below)
 - ii) the student has, or is, participating in an intervention strategy as outlined in 1.e.
 - iii) an approved deferment or suspension of study has been granted in accordance with Freshwater Christian College's Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy.
- d) Where the school decides to extend the duration of the student's study, the school will report this change via PRISMS within 14 days and/or issue a new COE if required. In this case, the student will need to contact the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) to seek advice on any potential impacts on their visa, including the need to obtain a new visa.

3) Monitoring Course attendance

- a) Satisfactory course attendance is attendance of 80% of scheduled course contact (school) hours.
- b) Student attendance is:
 - i) checked and recorded daily.
 - ii) assessed regularly.
 - iii) recorded and calculated over each study period.
- c) Late arrival at school will be recorded and will be included in attendance calculations.
- d) All absences from school will be included in the absentee calculation and should be accompanied by a medical certificate, an explanatory communication from the student's carer or evidence that leave has been approved by the Principal/Head of School.
- e) Any absences longer than 5 consecutive days without approval will be investigated.
- f) Student attendance will be monitored by the Enrolments & Community Relations Officer every 3 weeks over a study period to assess student attendance using the following method.
 - i) Calculating the number of school-hours the student would have to be absent to fall below the attendance threshold for a study period. (For example – a 20-week study period with 6.25 school hours per day would equal 625 hours. 20% of this is 125 hours).
 - ii) Attendance for any period of exclusion from class will be assessed under Freshwater Christian College's Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy.
- g) Parents of students at risk of breaching Freshwater Christian College's attendance requirements will be contacted by email and students will be counselled and offered any necessary support when they have 85% attendance in any study period.
- h) If the calculation at 3.f. indicates that the student has passed the attendance threshold for the study period, Freshwater Christian College will assess the student against the provisions of Item 3.j. (below). Where the student has failed to meet the minimum attendance requirement, and Item 3.j. does not apply, the school will

promptly advise the student of its intention to report the student for breach of visa condition 8202, and that he/she has 20 working days in which to access the school's internal complaints and appeals process.

- i) The school will notify the ESOS agency via PRISMS of the student not achieving satisfactory course attendance as soon as practicable where:
 - i) the student does not access the complaints and appeals process within 20 days.
 - ii) the student withdraws from the complaints and appeals process by notifying the Principal of Freshwater Christian College in writing.
 - iii) the complaints and appeals process results in a decision in favour of the school.
- j) Students will not be reported for failing to meet the 80% attendance threshold for a study period where:
 - i) the student produces documentary evidence clearly demonstrating compassionate or compelling circumstances e.g., medical illness supported by a medical certificate or as per Item 4. Definitions (below), and
 - ii) the student's attendance has not fallen below 70% attendance for the study period.
- k) The method for calculating 70% attendance is the same as that outlined in 3.f with the following change; number of school day's x school hours x 30%, or the number of school days x the number of school days per week x 30%.
- l) If a student is assessed as having nearly reached the threshold of 70% attendance for a study period, the Principal will assess whether a suspension of studies is in the interests of the student as per Freshwater Christian College's Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy.
- m) If the student does not obtain a suspension of studies under Freshwater Christian College's Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy, and falls below the 70% threshold for attendance for the study period, the process for reporting the student for unsatisfactory attendance (breach of visa condition 8202) will occur as outlined in 3.h. – 3.i.

4) Definitions

- a) *Compassionate or compelling circumstances* - circumstances beyond the control of the student that are having an impact on the student's progress through a course. These could include:
 - i) serious illness, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes.
 - ii) bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (with evidence of death certificate if possible).
 - iii) major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring their emergency travel that has impacted on their studies.
 - iv) a traumatic experience which has impacted on the student (these cases should be where possible supported by police or psychologists' reports).
 - v) where the school was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit.
 - vi) inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa.

For other circumstances to be considered as compassionate or compelling, evidence would need to be provided to show that these were having an impact on the student's progress through a course.
- b) *Expected duration* – the length of time it takes to complete the course studying full-time. This is the same as the registered course duration on CRICOS.
- c) *School day* – any day for which the school has scheduled course contact hours.
- d) *Study period* –

- i) For the purposes of monitoring attendance, a study period is a semester.
- ii) For the purposes of monitoring course progress in a Primary school (Prep to Year 6) or Junior Secondary (Year 7 to Year 10) school course, a study period is a semester.
- iii) For the purposes of monitoring course progress in a Senior Secondary (Year 11 and 12) course, a study period is a Unit of a subject or course of study. (ie; Unit 1 or Unit 2 in Year 11 and Unit 3 or Unit 4 in Year 12).
- e) Learning Options – the range of subjects and programs as outlined in Learning Options 1.2.2 of the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) [QCE and QCIA Handbook 2019](#).

Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy v7

1. Communicating with families about changes in enrolment status

- a. All communications regarding changes to enrolment status will be made directly with students and parents, in accordance with the latest contact details provided to the school.
- b. Parents must therefore keep Freshwater Christian College informed of their current contact details, as per the conditions of the student visa.
- c. Where relevant and where approved by the parents, the school may also share copies of correspondence with the child's education agent to help facilitate communication about any changes in enrolment status. However, the parents with whom the school has a formal written agreement are the primary contact for the school in such matters. The school will not act on any decision affecting the student's enrolment that is not made by the parents.

STUDENT-INITIATED CHANGES IN ENROLMENT

2. Deferment of commencement of study requested by student

- a) Freshwater Christian College will only grant a deferment of commencement of studies for compassionate and compelling circumstances. These include but are not limited to:
 - i) illness, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes
 - ii) bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided)
 - iii) major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel that has impacted on studies
 - iv) a traumatic experience which has impacted on the student (these cases should be where possible supported by police or psychologists' reports)
 - v) after undertaking ELICOS studies, the student has not/will not meet the English language benchmark required for entry into the desired course, and the school is willing to defer the student's commencement in the course until a later date when the required benchmark is achieved.
- b) All applications for deferment will be considered within 10 working days.
- c) The final decision for assessing and granting a deferment of commencement of studies lies with the Principal. Where a student's request to defer his/her commencement of studies is refused, the student has a right of appeal (see Freshwater Christian College's Complaints and Appeals policy).
- d) Deferment will be recorded on PRISMS within 14 days of being granted.

3. Suspension of study requested by student

- a. Once the student has commenced the course, Freshwater Christian College will only grant a suspension of study for compassionate and compelling circumstances. These include but are not limited to;
 - i) illness, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes
 - ii) bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided)
 - iii) major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel that has impacted on studies
 - iv) a traumatic experience which has impacted on the student (these cases should be where possible supported by police or psychologists' reports)
 - v) student return to their home country to sit a university exam (or similar assessment) which impacts upon their education
- b. Where there is a significant issue impacting upon a student's attendance or course progress, it is essential that the student or parents contact the school as soon as possible to discuss the concern so that appropriate support can be put in place. Where deemed necessary, this may involve temporarily suspending the student's enrolment so that matters can be resolved without having a negative impact on the student's ability to satisfy their visa conditions.
- c. Temporary suspensions of study cannot exceed 6 month's duration.
- d. Suspensions will be recorded on PRISMS within 14 days of being granted if the student is under 18 years of age, and within 31 days if the student is over 18 years of age.
- e. The period of suspension will not be included in attendance calculations.
- f. Applications will be assessed on merit by the Principal.
- g. Some examples of circumstances that are not considered compassionate and compelling at Freshwater Christian College include:
 - i) Requests for early departure or late return from vacation, including inability to secure cheap flights
 - ii) Leaving early or returning late from holidays in order to attend festivals in the student's home country
 - iii) Returning home to attend family gatherings that occur during term time.
- h. As part of any assessment of a request to defer or temporarily suspend studies, the impact of the request on the student's ability to complete their intended course of study in accordance with their CoE/s and student visa will be considered. Any implications will be communicated to students.
- i. All applications for suspension will be considered within 10 working days.
- j. The final decision for assessing and granting a suspension of studies lies with the Principal. Where a student's request to suspend studies is refused, the student has a right of appeal (see Freshwater Christian College's Complaints and Appeals policy).

4. Student initiated cancellation of enrolment

- a. All notifications of withdrawal from a course, or applications for refunds must be made in writing and submitted to the Principal. Please see Freshwater Christian College's Refund Policy (and if applicable Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy) for information regarding refunds (and if applicable cancellation fees).
- b. A student will be deemed to have inactively notified Freshwater Christian College of cancellation of enrolment where:
 - i) the student has not yet finished his/her course/s of study with the school, and
 - ii) does not resume studies at the school within [14 days] after a holiday break, and

- iii) the student has not previously provided the school with written notification of withdrawal.
- c. Student-initiated cancellation of enrolment, including “inactive” cancellation of enrolment in 4.b), above, is not subject to Freshwater Christian College’s Complaints and Appeals Policy.

SCHOOL-INITIATED CHANGES IN ENROLMENT

5. School Initiated Exclusion from class

- a. Freshwater Christian College may exclude a student from class studies on the grounds of misbehaviour by the student. Exclusion will occur as the result of any behaviour identified as resulting in exclusion in Freshwater Christian College’s Behaviour Management Policy.
- b. Students may also be excluded from class for failure to pay fees that he/she was required to pay in order to undertake or continue the course, as stated in the written agreement.
- c. Where Freshwater Christian College intends to exclude a student from class it will first issue a letter which notifies the student and parents of this intention. The letter will provide details of the reason/s for the intended exclusion, as well as information about how to access Freshwater Christian College’s internal appeals process. Further information about the appeals process in the event of a school-initiated exclusion from class is outlined below.
- d. Excluded students must abide by the conditions of their exclusion from studies which will depend on the welfare and accommodation arrangements in place for each student and which will be determined by the Principal.
- e. Where the student is provided with homework or other studies for the period of the exclusion, the student must continue to meet the academic requirements of the course.
- f. Exclusions from class will not be recorded on PRISMS.

6. School-Initiated Suspension of studies

- a) Freshwater Christian College may initiate a suspension of studies for a student on the grounds of misbehaviour by the student. Suspension will occur as the result of any behaviour identified as resulting in suspension in Freshwater Christian College’s Behaviour Management Policy.
- b) Students may also be suspended for failure to pay fees that he/she was required to pay in order to undertake or continue the course, as stated in the student’s written agreement.
- c) Where Freshwater Christian College intends to suspend the enrolment of a student, it will first issue a letter that notifies the student and parents of this intention. The letter will provide details of the reason/s for the intended suspension, as well as information about how to access Freshwater Christian College’s internal appeals process. Further information about the appeals process in the event of a school-initiated suspension is outlined below.
- d) Suspended students must abide by the conditions of their suspension from studies which will depend on the welfare and accommodation arrangements in place for each student and which will be determined by the Principal.
- e) Students who have been suspended for more than 28 days may need to contact Department of Home Affairs (Immigration). (See contact details at <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/contact-us>)
- f) Suspensions will be recorded on PRISMS.
- g) The period of suspension will not be included in attendance calculations.

7. School Initiated cancellation of enrolment

- a. Freshwater Christian College will cancel the enrolment of a student under the following conditions;

- i) Any breach of an agreed condition of enrolment as outlined in the student's written agreement, including failure to disclose a pre-existing condition requiring a high degree of specialised support or care
 - ii) Failure to pay course fees
 - iii) Failure to maintain approved welfare and accommodation arrangements (visa condition 8532).
 - iv) Any behaviour identified as resulting in cancellation in Freshwater Christian College's Behaviour Management Policy.
- b. Where Freshwater Christian College intends to cancel the enrolment of a student it will first issue a letter which notifies the student and parents of this intention. The letter will also provide details of the reason/s for the intended cancellation, as well as information about how to access Freshwater Christian College's internal appeals process. Further information about the appeals process in the event of a school-initiated cancellation is outlined below.
- c. Freshwater Christian College is required to report any confirmed breach of course progress and attendance requirements to the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration). Where a student is reported for breach of visa condition, his/her enrolment at Freshwater Christian College will be cancelled and this may impact on the student's visa. Further information can be found in Freshwater Christian College's Course Progress and Attendance Policy.
- d. For the duration of the internal appeals process, Freshwater Christian College will maintain the student's enrolment and the student will attend classes as normal. The Principal will determine if participation in studies will be in class or under a supervised arrangement outside of classes.
- e. If a student decides to access Freshwater Christian College's complaints and appeals process because they have been notified of a school initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment under Standard 9, the change in enrolment status will not be reported in PRISMS until the internal complaints and appeals process is finalised, unless extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student apply (see Definitions below).
- f. Where extenuating circumstances are deemed to exist, a student may still access the complaints and appeals process, but Freshwater Christian College need not await the outcome of this process before changing the student's enrolment status in PRISMS. If the school has issued a CAAW for such a student, welfare provisions under Standard 5.6 are applicable.
- g. The use of extenuating circumstances by Freshwater Christian College to suspend or cancel a student's enrolment prior to the completion of any complaints and appeals process will be supported by appropriate evidence.
- h. The final decision for evaluating extenuating circumstances lies with the Principal.

8. Student to seek information from Department of Home Affairs (Immigration)

- a) Deferment, suspension and cancellation of enrolment can have an effect on a student's visa as a result of changes to enrolment status. Students can visit the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) Website <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/student-500> for further information about their visa conditions and obligations.

Definitions

Day – any day including weekends and public holidays in or out of term time

Extenuating circumstances - if the student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is likely to be at risk. Examples include:

- the student refuses to maintain approved welfare and accommodation arrangements (for students under 18 years of age)
- the student is missing
- the student has medical concerns or severe depression or psychological issues which lead the school to fear for the student's wellbeing
- the student has engaged or threatened to engage in behaviour that is reasonably believed to endanger the student or others
- is at risk of committing a criminal offence, or
- the student is the subject of investigation relating to criminal matters.

Refund Policy v5

- 1) This policy outlines refunds applicable to course fees paid to the school including any course fees paid to an education agent to be remitted to the school.
- 2) Any service fees a student (or parent(s)/legal guardian if the student is under 18) pays direct to a third party are not within the scope of this refund policy.
- 3) The Application Fee is non-refundable.
- 4) Payment of Course Fees and Refunds
 - a. Fees are payable according to Freshwater Christian College's Fee Schedule (International).
 - b. An itemised list of school fees is provided in the school's written agreement [as per the NC Standard 3.3.4].
 - c. All fees must be paid in Australian dollars unless requested otherwise. Refunds will be reimbursed in the same currency as fees were received.
 - d. Refunds will be paid to the person who enters into the written agreement unless the school receives written advice from the person who enters the written agreement to pay the refund to someone else.
- 5) All notification of withdrawal from a course, or applications for refunds, must be made in writing and submitted to the Principal.
- 6) Student default because of visa refusal
 - a) If a student produces evidence of visa refusal (or provides permission for the school to verify visa refusal with the Department of Home Affairs) and fails to start a course on, or withdraws from the course on or before the agreed starting day, the school will refund within four weeks of receiving a written claim from the student the total amount of course fees received by the school before the student's default day;
 - b) If a student whose visa has been refused withdraws from the course after it has commenced, the school will retain the amount of tuition fees proportionate to the amount of the course the student has undertaken and will refund of any unused tuition fees* received by the school with respect to the student within the period of four weeks after the day of student default.

**Calculation of the refund due in this case is prescribed by a legislative instrument (s.10 of Education Services for Overseas Students (Calculation of Refund) Specification 2014).*

- 7) Student default

Any amount owing under this section will be paid within 4 weeks of receiving a written claim from the student (or parent(s)/legal guardian if the student is under 18).

a) Non-tuition fees:

Non-tuition fees will be refunded on a pro rata basis proportional to the amount of time the student was studying in the course, except where a non-refundable payment on behalf of the student has been made.

b) Non-commencement with no notification of withdrawal

If the student, does not provide written notice of withdrawal, and does not start the course on the agreed starting date, up to \$500 of tuition fees will be retained from tuition fees received by the school.

c) Non-commencement with notification of withdrawal

If tuition fees for up to two semesters have been received in advance by the school and the school receives written notification of withdrawal by the student (or parent(s)/legal guardian if the student is under 18), the school will retain an administration fee of \$250 and refund the balance of the tuition fees.

d) Refunds after commencement of a course:

If tuition fees for up to 1 term/semester have been received in advance:

Where the student (or parent(s)/legal guardian if the student is under 18) notifies the school in writing of withdrawal before completing the term/semester, no tuition fees will be refunded.

If tuition fees for more than 1 term/semester have been received in advance:

If fees for more than one term/semester have been received in advance, and the school receives written notification of withdrawal by the student (or parent(s)/legal guardian if the student is under 18), the school will refund the amount of unused tuition fees less administration fee of \$250, provided that at least 10 weeks written notice of withdrawal has been received. Where 10 weeks written notice of withdrawal has not been given, the school will refund the unused tuition fees less administration fee of \$500.

e) Refunds in the event of a provider initiated cancellation of enrolment:

i. No refund of tuition fees will be made where a student's enrolment is cancelled for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to maintain satisfactory course progress (visa condition 8202). Please see Course Progress and Attendance Policy
- Failure to maintain satisfactory attendance (visa condition 8202). Please see Course Progress and Attendance Policy
- Failure to maintain approved welfare and accommodation arrangements (visa condition 8532). *[If applicable]*: Please see Accommodation and Welfare Policy
- Failure to pay course fees.
- Any behaviour identified as resulting in enrolment cancellation in Freshwater Christian College's Behaviour Management Policy. Please see

<http://www.freshwatercc.qld.edu.au/enrolments/international-students/>

ii. Any refund in the case of cancellation of a student's enrolment for failure to maintain Freshwater Christian College's agreed conditions of enrolments as outlined in the student's written agreement, including failure to disclose a pre-existing condition requiring a high degree of specialised support or care, will be at the discretion of the school.

8) School (Provider) Default (*Any default by the school must be compliant with the current provisions of the ESOS Act 2000 and the ESOS Regulations 2019*).

- a. If for any reason the school is unable to offer a course on an agreed starting day for the course, and the student for some reason cannot be placed or refuses placement in an alternative course arranged by the school, a full refund of any unused tuition fees* received by the school with respect to the student will be made within 14 days of the agreed course starting day.
- b. If for any reason the school is unable to continue offering a course after the student commences a course, and the student for some reason cannot be placed or refuses placement in an alternative course arranged by the school, a full refund of any unused tuition fees* received by the school with respect to the student will be made within 14 days of the course school's default day.
- c. In the event that the school is unable to fulfil its obligations of providing an agreeable alternative course for the student, or a refund, the student will receive assistance from the Australian Government's Tuition Protection Service.

For information on the TPS, please see: <https://tps.gov.au/StaticContent/Get/StudentInformation>

* Calculation of the refund due in this case is prescribed by a legislative instrument (s.7 of Education Services for Overseas Students (Calculation of Refund) Specification 2014). www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2014L00907.

9. This written agreement, and the right to make complaints and seek appeals of decisions and action under various processes, does not affect the rights of the student to take action under the Australian Consumer Law if the Australian Consumer Law applies.
10. If the student changes visa status (e.g. becomes a temporary or permanent resident) he/she will continue to pay full overseas student's (International) fees for the duration of that year.

Definitions:

Non-tuition fees – fees not directly related to provision of the student's course, including bus fees, application fees, OSHC fees.

Course fees – the sum of tuition fees and non-tuition fees received by the school in respect of the student in order for the student to undertake the course.

Tuition fees – fees directly related to the provision of the student's course.

Term – there are 4 terms in one school year. A Term is approximately 9-11 weeks

Semester – there are 2 semesters in one school year. A Semester and is made up of 2 Terms (eg; either Term 1 and Term 2 OR Term 3 and Term 4).

Overseas Student Transfer Request Policy v5

Freshwater Christian College's Overseas Student Transfer Request Policy and processes apply to:

- overseas students requesting to transfer prior to completing the first six months of their first registered school sector course or
- where the student has completed the first six months of their enrolment in their first registered school sector course and wishes to transfer but the provider holds welfare responsibility via a CAAW.

Overseas students requesting to transfer prior to completing the first six months of their first registered school sector course:

- 1) Overseas students are restricted from transferring from their first registered school sector course of study for a period of six months. This restriction also applies to any course(s) packaged with their first registered school sector course of study. Exceptions to this restriction are:
 - a) If the student's course or school becomes unregistered
 - b) The school has a government sanction imposed on its registration
 - c) A government sponsor (if applicable) considers a transfer to be in the student's best interests
 - d) If the student is granted a release in PRISMS.

- 2) Students can apply to be released by submitting a Student Transfer Request Assessment Application at no charge to enable them to transfer to another education provider. However, if a student has not completed the first six months of the first registered school sector course of study or is under 18 years of age, conditions apply.

- 3) Freshwater Christian College will only release a student before completing the first six months of their first registered school sector course in the following circumstances:
 - a) The student has changed welfare and accommodation arrangements and is no longer within a reasonable travelling time of the school.
 - b) The student will be reported because they are unable to achieve satisfactory course progress at the level they are studying, even after engaging with Freshwater Christian College's intervention strategy to assist them in accordance with Standard 8 (Overseas student visa requirements).
 - c) The student provides evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances.
 - d) Freshwater Christian College fails to deliver the course as outlined in the written agreement.
 - e) The student provides evidence that their reasonable expectations about their current course are not being met.
 - f) The student provides evidence that he/she was misled by Freshwater Christian College or an education or migration agent regarding Freshwater Christian College or its course and the course is therefore unsuitable to his/her needs and/or study objectives.
 - g) An appeal (internal or external) on another matter results in a decision or recommendation to release the student.
 - h) Any other reason stated in the policies of Freshwater Christian College.

- 4) Students under 18 years of age MUST also have:
 - a) Written evidence that the student's parent(s)/legal guardian supports the transfer application
 - b) Written confirmation that the receiving provider will accept responsibility for and communicate with the student about approving the student's accommodation, support, and general welfare arrangements from the proposed date of release where the student is not living with a parent/legal guardian or a suitable nominated relative.

- 5) Freshwater Christian College will NOT agree to the transfer before the student completes the first six months of their first registered school sector course in the following circumstances:
 - a) The student's progress is likely to be academically disadvantaged

- b) Freshwater Christian College is concerned that the student's application to transfer is a consequence of the adverse influence of another party
 - c) The student has not had sufficient time to settle into a new environment in order to make an informed decision about transfer
 - d) The student has not accessed school support services which may assist with making adjustments to a new environment, including academic and personal counselling services
 - e) School (Tuition) fees have not been paid for the current term/semester.
- 6) To apply for transfer to another provider, students need to:
 - a) Complete an Application for Overseas Student Transfer Request Assessment Form available from the Principal.
 - b) Give this completed application form and a valid offer of enrolment from another provider to the Principal for assessment.
 - c) If under 18 years of age, attach written confirmation of the parent/s or legal guardian/s support for the transfer to the nominated provider. In this case, the valid offer of enrolment must also confirm the new provider's acceptance of responsibility for approving the student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements from the proposed date of the student's release from Freshwater Christian College, in accordance with Standard 5 (Younger overseas students) of the 2018 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training for Overseas Students.
 - 7) Freshwater Christian College will assess the student's transfer request application and notify the student of a decision within 10 working days.
 - 8) If Freshwater Christian College grants the student's transfer request, the student will be notified and the decision will be reported to the Department of Home Affairs via PRISMS.
 - 9) If Freshwater Christian College intends to refuse the student's transfer application request, Freshwater Christian College will provide the student with reasons for refusal in writing and include a copy of Freshwater Christian College's complaints and appeals policy (available at www.freshwatercc.qld.edu.au). The student has the right to access Freshwater Christian College's complaints and appeals process and has 20 working days to do this. The overseas student's transfer request application will only be finalised in PRISMS after one of the following occurs:
 - a) the student confirms in writing they choose not to access Freshwater Christian College's complaints and appeals process, or
 - b) the student confirms in writing they withdraw from any appeals process they have commenced, or
 - c) the appeals process is completed and a decision has been made in favour of the student or Freshwater Christian College.
 - 10) Applications to transfer to another registered provider may have visa implications. The student is advised to contact the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) office as soon as possible to discuss any implications: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/contact-us>.

Students who are no longer subject to the transfer restriction but where Freshwater Christian College holds welfare responsibility via a CAAW.

- 11) Students under 18 years of age MUST have:
- Written evidence that the student's parent(s)/legal guardian supports the transfer application.
 - Written confirmation that the receiving provider will accept responsibility for and communicate with the student about approving the student's accommodation, support, and general welfare arrangements from the proposed date of release where the student is not living with a parent/legal guardian or a suitable nominated relative.
- 12) To apply for transfer to another provider, students need to:
- Complete an Application for Student Transfer Form available from the Principal.
 - Give this completed application form and a valid offer of enrolment from another provider to the Principal for assessment and response within 10 working days.
 - If under 18 years of age, attach written confirmation of support for the transfer to the nominated provider by a parent/s or legal guardian/s.
In this case, the valid offer of enrolment must confirm acceptance of responsibility for approving the student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements from the proposed date of the student's release from Freshwater Christian College in accordance with Standard 5 (Younger overseas students) of the 2018 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training for Overseas Students.
- 13) Freshwater Christian College will negotiate the welfare transfer date with the receiving provider and will advise the student of the welfare transfer date within 10 working days.
- 14) Transfers to another registered provider may have visa implications. The student is advised to contact the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) office as soon as possible to discuss any implications. <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/contact-us>.

International Student Visa Conditions

For a full list of **mandatory** and **discretionary** student visa conditions please visit www.homeaffairs.gov.au

Academic Progress

- Students will obtain satisfactory results in all subjects in order to continue in the program.
- Students will abide by the school Behaviour Management Policy and all other school Policies located in the Student Diary issued to all students on commencement.
- Freshwater Christian College will monitor the student's performance, and inform the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) if the student's results are not satisfactory.
- The school will provide written school reports to students and parents every semester.

Attendance

- Students will strive to attend school on every school day of each term. Students who are sick and absent from school will obtain a valid medical certificate.
- Students who miss more than five consecutive days of schooling without a valid reason may have their enrolment cancelled.
- Freshwater Christian College will inform Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) if the student's attendance falls below 80%.

Student Administration Information

Paying Fees

Fees are invoiced half yearly and must be paid in full by the due date indicated on the Tax Invoice. Please contact our finance office should you have any queries. Contact details are: Mrs Jenny Ireland or Mrs Rebecca Heaton, 07 4055 1337 or email: finance@fcc.qld.edu.au

Conditions of Enrolment

- a. Freshwater Christian College's English language proficiency requirement for entry to mainstream Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 is a minimum score of 5.5 on the IELTS test. Depending on the student's English language ability, the student may be required to successfully complete an ELICOS course and be reassessed for English Language Proficiency prior to entry to mainstream.
- b. As a condition of enrolment, the student (and, if the student is under 18 years of age, the student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s), agrees to keep a copy of this written agreement and receipts of any tuition fees or non-tuition fees paid to Freshwater Christian College.
- c. As a condition of enrolment, the student authorises Freshwater Christian College to log into the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) website to check visa entitlements electronically via VEVO for the duration of enrolment on <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/already-have-a-visa/check-visa-details-and-conditions/check-conditions-online>
- d. As a condition of enrolment, from Year 10 onwards, the student agrees to allow Freshwater Christian College to open a learning account in the student's name with the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, and for the student to be assigned a Learning Unique Identifier (LUI) for certification of studies purposes.
- e. As a condition of enrolment, the student/parent/legal guardian agrees to disclose any essential information relating to additional support or care the student might require because of an existing medical condition, including the need for prescribed medication; or disability, including learning disorder, or other need for specialised support. Failure to do this may result in cancellation of enrolment.
- f. As a condition of enrolment, the student/parent/legal guardian agrees that all students for whom the provider holds a Confirmation of Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) must maintain approved arrangements for the entire duration of enrolment, irrespective of the age of the student.
- g. As a condition of enrolment, in the event of a significant or critical welfare issue involving the student, and if determined necessary by the school, a parent, legal guardian or approved relative agrees to travel to a designated location within 4 days (96 hours) to assume care of the student until the situation has been resolved to the school's satisfaction.
- h. As a condition of enrolment, the student agrees to abide by all school policies for the duration of enrolment and to disclose any medical or health conditions that may affect studies or student welfare. Please refer to the following policies:
 - Entry Requirements Policy
 - Welfare and Accommodation Policy
 - Complaints and Appeals Policy
 - Student Progress, Attendance and Course Duration Policy
 - Behaviour Management Policy
 - Secondary Students Code of Conduct
 - Overseas Student Transfer Request Assessment Policy
 - Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy
 - Overseas Student Fee Schedule
 - Refund Policy

- i. Freshwater Christian College’s policies may change from time to time. Please refer to www.freshwatercc.qd.edu.au or contact Reception for the current versions of school policies. Freshwater Christian College will provide notice of significant changes to school policies.
- j. Failure to maintain Freshwater Christian College’s agreed conditions of enrolment may result in cancellation of the student’s enrolment.

Student ID Cards

ID cards are issued annually in February/March. Students are required to bring their ID card to school each day and when borrowing from the College Library. Replacement ID cards will incur a fee.

Textbooks

Students from Prep to Year 6 are provided stationery by the school. Students from Year 7 to 12 are required to source their own stationery from the list provided by the College.

Textbooks are loaned to students from the College Library, as directed by the Class Teacher. Any loss or damage to these textbooks will incur additional fees.

Student Support Services

Contact information:

Campus Address: 369-401 Brinsmead Road, Brinsmead, Qld, 4870
Postal Address: PO Box 643, Redlynch, QLD, 4870, Australia
Telephone: (07) 4055 1337
Email: enrolments@fcc.qld.edu.au
Website: www.freshwatercc.qld.edu.au
Office Hours: 8.00am – 4:00pm Mondays to Thursdays
 8.00am – 3.00pm Fridays (closed on Queensland Public Holidays)

| Staff Member in this Role | Area of Responsibility for Overseas Students | Method to Contact / make Appointment |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mrs Howard | Orientation on arrival | Reception |
| Pastoral Care/Form Teacher | ESL Support | Staff Room |
| Pastoral Care/Form Teacher | Other tutorial support | Staff Room |
| Primary students: Mr Natoli | Academic and Careers Counselling | Primary office |
| Secondary students: Mrs Wendy Smith | | Pastoral Care office |
| Mrs Wendy Smith | Personal Counselling | Pastoral Care office |
| Mrs Howard | Monitoring of homestay /accommodation/care arrangements | Finance building or Reception |
| Mrs Howard | Complaints and appeals | Finance building or Reception |
| Mrs Howard | Visa / Passport issues | Finance building or Reception |

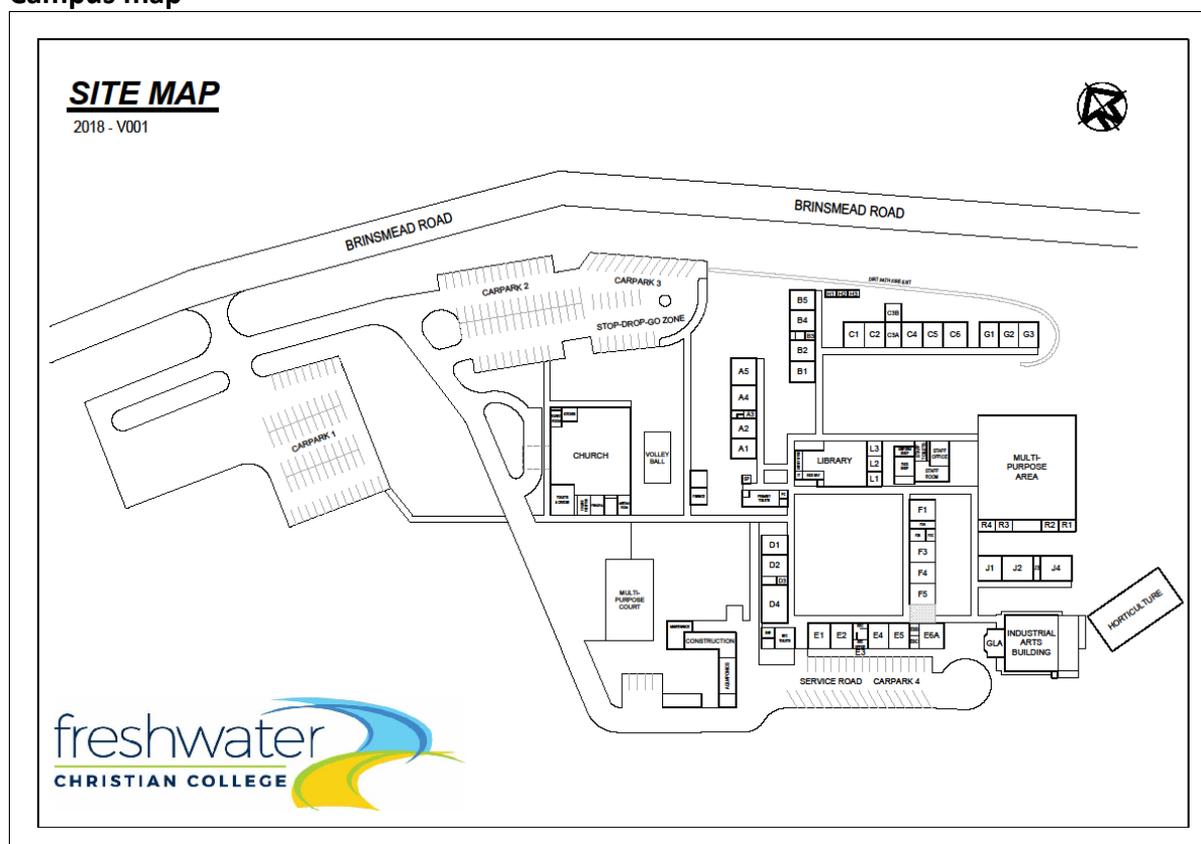
| | | |
|------------|------|-------------------------------|
| Mrs Howard | OSHC | Finance building or Reception |
|------------|------|-------------------------------|

Campus & Facilities

List of Facilities

- Well-equipped classrooms
- 21st century library
- 3 x dedicated computer laboratories
- 3 x Science labs
- Home ec lab
- Music and drama rooms
- Covered stadium
- Tennis/multipurpose court
- Rugby field
- Soccer fields
- Tuckshop / canteen
- Construction workshop
- Playground equipment
- Covered walkways
- Air-conditioned classrooms
- Auditorium

Campus map



Calendar of Events

Students will be given the College Calendar at orientation and can also refer to the College Calendar at

Subject Selection

Students in Years 9 to 12 may choose their elective subjects. For more details, please refer to www.freshwatercc.qld.edu.au

Timetables

Students are issued their individual timetables during the first week of school by their class teacher.

Bell Times

| Period | Session Times | Bell Times |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Form | 8.30am-8.40am | 8.25am (warning), 8.30am, 8.40am |
| 1 | 8.40am-9.25am | 9.25am |
| 2 | 9.25am-10.10am | 10.10am |
| Morning Recess (10.10am – 10.35am) | | 10.30am (warning), 10.35am |
| 3 | 10.35am–11.15am | 11.15am |
| 4 | 11.15am-11.55am | 11.55am |
| 5 | 11.55am-12.35pm | 12.35pm |
| Lunch (12.35pm – 1.25pm) | | 1.20pm (warning), 1.25pm |
| 6 | 1.25pm-2.05pm | 2.05pm |
| 7 | 2.05pm-2.50pm | 2.50pm |

Academic Support & Expectations

Teaching

It is a requirement that all teachers at Freshwater Christian College are fully committed Christians in regular church attendance. We all know that lifestyles are more ‘caught than taught.’ Our teachers are able to role model the Christian life for our students.

All teachers in Queensland, including those at Freshwater Christian College, must be qualified to teach and be registered with the Queensland College of Teachers.

Keys to Academic Success

1. Be in class
2. Complete work on time
3. Establish time management
4. Establish good study habits
5. Practice active learning in the classroom
6. Seek support from Teachers outside of class if necessary
7. Work to the best of your ability

Study Skills

Study skills and **study strategies** are abilities and approaches applied to learning. They are generally critical to success in school, are considered essential for acquiring good grades, and are useful for learning throughout one's life. They include removing distractions, time management and note-taking.

One method used by structured students to keep them on track is the PQRST method. This method prioritizes the information in a way that relates directly to how they will be asked to use that information in an exam. The method can also be modified to suit any particular form of learning in most subjects. It allows more accurate timing of work rather than the student having to decide how much time to attribute to a topic. PQRST is an acronym for **P**review, **Q**uestion, **R**ead, **S**ummary, **T**est.

Preview: the student looks at the topic to be learned by glancing over the major headings or the points in the syllabus.

Question: then questions to be answered once the topic has been thoroughly studied are formulated.

Read: reference material related to the topic is read through, and the information that best relates to the questions is chosen.

Summary: the student summarizes the topic, bringing his or her own ways of summarizing information into the process, including written notes, spider diagrams, flow diagrams, labeled diagrams, mnemonics, or even voice recordings.

Test: then the student answers the questions created in the question step as fully as possible, avoiding adding questions that might distract or change the subject.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is copying someone else's work without acknowledging it properly. Plagiarism is dishonest and is the same as stealing and lying. Students commit an act of plagiarism if they copy, without proper acknowledgement, from another student's work, from a book, magazine, newspaper, CD or the internet.

At Freshwater Christian College we want to protect the fundamental rights of students who work faithfully and honestly within the school's assessment procedures. We want to assure students that if they do the right thing in meeting assessment demands that they will not be disadvantaged.

To do this we need your help as students to display proper and informative decisions when completing exams and assessment pieces. Full details of consequences for plagiarism/cheating incidents are detailed in the Student Diary under the College Plagiarism Policy.

Tutoring

If you require tutoring, please discuss with your class teacher or ask at Primary Admin or Secondary Admin Offices. The International Student Officer can also provide advice.

English Language Support

Freshwater Christian College seeks to encourage and support students, whose first language is not English to becoming proficient users in Standard Australian English. Where students require ESL support, the College will assist with arranging ESL tutoring at the student's expense.

Assessments

Assessments can be undertaken by way of Assignments, Tests or Exams.

Assignments

Assignment Planner

Each Term an Assignment Planner is published to show the assignments, tests and other major items of work that must be completed for the term. Other information, like due date, is also given so that students can plan their research and homework times best.

Deadlines

All students in all grades will be required to submit assignments on time, that is, during the subject period on the date given for the handing in of the assignment.

Failure to hand assignments in by the due date, (without valid reason) may result in a number of consequences such as lunchtime detentions, after school detention or in-school suspension, to enable the assignment to be completed. For Year 11 and 12 students, QCAA policy requires schools to not credit students the whole semester of work when a major piece of assessment has not been submitted. All assignments must still be handed in.

It is stressed that all assignments need to be and must be completed. Students failing to complete the required items put themselves in a difficult position. If all assignments have not been handed in, the subject is not completed and exit statements which are issued will show this.

Extensions

Extensions may be granted on the grounds of:

1. Sickness - only on the provision of a medical certificate, or definite written details by the parents of the illness, and how it prevented completion of the assignment. Staying home to do an assignment on the day it is due is not accepted.
2. Other extenuating circumstances, approved by the Senior Teacher or Principal.
3. Extensions should be sought prior to the due date.

Tests

Tests are in class assessments which are designed to give the teacher an indication to student's abilities.

Exams

Formal, block examinations may be held for senior secondary students in all subjects at the end of each Unit. Senior students who do not have an exam in a particular timeslot need not attend school. To do this they need to have written permission in their diary and show this to their form teachers. If students are ill for an exam, a medical certificate is required. It is expected that students will have a clear understanding of the scope of each examination and will be given appropriate revision time. Teachers are expected to vary tasks from year to year in each subject.

During formal testing, 'Examination Conditions' apply from the moment the teacher begins the distribution of the papers until the last papers are collected. These include:

- Spreading students out throughout the examination room with desks as far apart as possible.
- Instructing students to raise a hand to indicate a problem.
- Refusing permission for students to borrow equipment from other students for the life of the test, although the teacher may be able to assist with materials in some circumstances.
- During the life of the test, ensuring that students do not communicate with one another in any way.
- Refusing permission for students to leave the examination room during testing, unless accompanied by another teacher.
- Not allowing students to leave the examination room in the last fifteen minutes of the examination.

Reports

Reports are issued at the end of each Semester (half yearly) for every student. Parents are invited to attend Parent/Teacher interviews at the beginning of Term 2 and Term 4.

Library Services

The library is open Monday to Friday, during school hours. Primary school students (Prep to Year 6) have one (1) library lesson each week. All students may borrow books from the library using their ID card.

My Student Survival Page

EMERGENCY 000

or **112** from my mobile (to override key locks)

Government Departments

DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS (IMMIGRATION) –

131 881 **www.homeaffairs.gov.au**

ATP – Australian Taxation Office

Tax File Number: 132 861 www.ato.gov.au

Health Cover

Medibank Private Overseas Student Health Cover - 132 331

Institution 24hr Emergency

Mrs Anita Howard – 0419 190 376 or

Mrs Julieanne Lomas – 0429 805 440

Section 5 - Social and Cultural

Adjusting to Life in Australia

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

➤ **Listen, observe and ask questions**

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

➤ **Become involved**

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

➤ **Try to maintain a sense of perspective**

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

➤ **Maintain some of the routines and rituals you may have had in your home country.**

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

➤ **Keep lines of communication open with those at home.**

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

➤ **Sense of humour**

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

➤ **Ask for help**

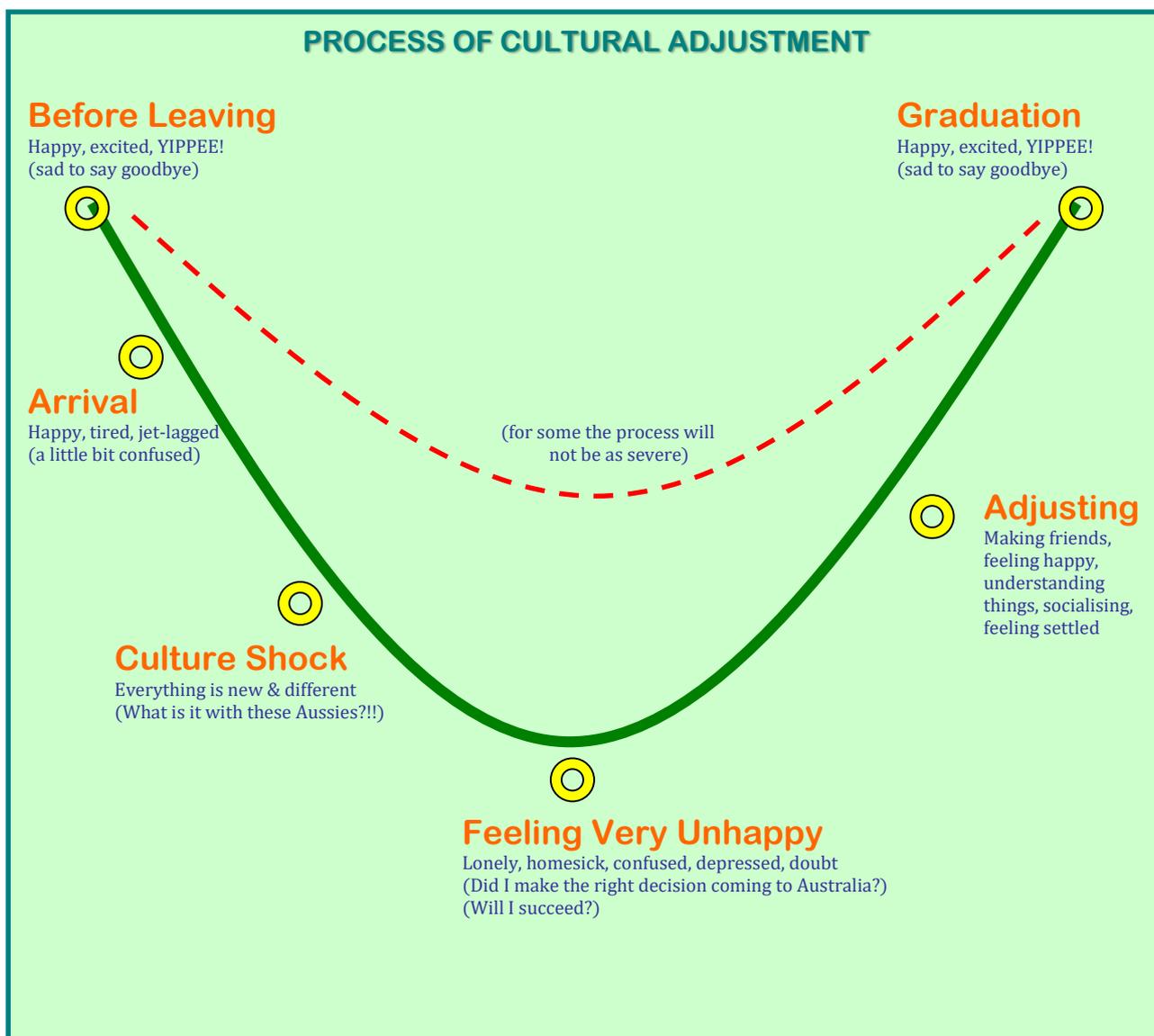
Don't be afraid to ask for assistance or support if you need it. In addition to the Counselling Service there are many organisations set up on campus to ensure you have a successful and enjoyable time in Australia.

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

(Source: Macquarie University)

Culture Shock

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



Overcoming Culture Shock

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

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

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

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

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

(Source: Rotary International Youth Exchange)

Australian Culture

Social Customs

Greeting People

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

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

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

Clothing Customs

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

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

Many Australians live close to the beach and the sea. On hot days, they may wear little clothing on the beach and surrounds. This does not mean that people who dress to go to the beach or

swimming have low moral standards. It means that this is what we accept on and near our beaches.

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

Polite Behaviour

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

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

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

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

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

Australian Slang

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

Bring a plate - when you are invited to a party and asked to 'bring a plate', this means to bring a dish of food to share with your host and other guests.

Take the food to the party in any type of dish, not just a plate, and it is usually ready to serve. This is common for communal gatherings such as for school, work or a club. If you are unsure what to bring, you can ask the host.

BYO - when an invitation to a party says 'BYO', this means 'bring your own' drink. If you do not drink alcohol, it is acceptable to bring juice, soft drink or soda, or water. Some restaurants are BYO. You can bring your own wine to these, although there is usually a charge for providing and cleaning glasses called 'corkage'.

Arvo - This is short for afternoon. 'Drop by this arvo,' means please come and visit this afternoon.

Fortnight - This term describes a period of two weeks.

Barbeque, BBQ, barbie - outdoor cooking, usually of meat or seafood over a grill or hotplate using gas or coals. The host serves the meat with salads and bread rolls. It is common for a guest, when invited to a BBQ, to ask if they should bring anything.

Snag - The raw type sausages usually cooked at a BBQ. They can be made of pork, beef or chicken.

Chook - The term chook means a chicken, usually a hen.

Cuppa - a cup of tea or coffee 'Drop by this arvo for a cuppa' means please come and visit this afternoon for a cup of tea or coffee.

Loo or dunny - These are slang terms for toilet. If you are a guest in someone's house for the first time, it is usually polite to ask permission to use his or her toilet. 'May I use your toilet please?' Some people ask, 'Where's the loo?'

Fair dinkum - honest, the truth. 'Fair dinkum?' when used as a question means, 'is it really true?'

To be crook - to be sick or ill.

Flat out - busy.

Shout - to buy someone a drink. At a bar or a pub when a group of friends meet, it is usual for each person to 'shout a round', meaning buy everybody a drink. Each person takes a turn at buying a 'round'. It is also acceptable to say that you do not drink (alcohol) by saying that you are a 'teetotaler'. This also means you are not obliged to shout.

Bloke - a man. Sometimes if you ask for help, you may get an answer to 'see that bloke over there'.

How ya goin? 'How are you going?' means how are you, or how do you do? It does not mean what form of transport you are taking. Sometimes it can sound like 'ow-ya-goin-mate'.

For more information on Australian slang visit:

<https://www.australiaday.com.au/get-involved/aussie-slang-dictionary/letter/h/>

Responding to an Invitation

What could I be invited to?

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

How are invitations made?

Invitations can be written or spoken. Written ones usually ask for RSVP, (which is *repondez s'il vous plait* in French) and means please reply. You should reply whether you intend to go or not. The invitation will tell you how to reply and when the reply is expected. Your host may be specific

about how many people are invited. If your host invites the whole family, you should tell your host how many people would go. Usually a family is the parents and their children.

What if I do accept an invitation?

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

What if I cannot accept an invitation?

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

(Source: Department of Home Affairs (Immigration))

Tipping

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

Public Holidays & Special Celebrations

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

New Year

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

Australia Day

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

Easter

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

In addition to its religious significance, Easter in Australia is enjoyed as a four-day holiday weekend starting on Good Friday and ending on Easter Monday. This extra-long weekend is an opportunity

for Australians to take a mini-holiday, or get together with family and friends. Easter often coincides with school holidays, so many people with school aged children incorporate Easter into a longer family holiday. Easter is the busiest time for domestic air travel in Australia, and a very popular time for gatherings such as weddings and christenings.

- **Hot Cross Buns:** Hot cross buns are sweet, spiced buns made with dried fruit and leavened with yeast. A cross, the symbol of Christ, is placed on top of the buns, either with pastry or a simple mixture of flour and water. The buns are traditionally eaten on Good Friday; however, in Australia they are available in bakeries and stores many weeks before Easter.
- A recent variation on the traditional fruit bun has become popular in Australia. A chocolate version is made with the same spiced mixture, but cocoa is added to the dough and chocolate chips replace the dried fruit.
- **Easter Eggs:** Eggs, symbolising new life, have long been associated with the Easter festival. Chocolate Easter eggs are a favourite part of Easter in Australia. Some families and community groups organise Easter egg hunts for children in parks and recreational areas. Easter eggs are traditionally eaten on Easter Sunday, however stores start stocking Easter treats well before the Easter holiday period.
- **The Easter Bunny:** Early on Easter Sunday morning, the Easter Bunny 'delivers' chocolate Easter eggs to children in Australia, as he does in many parts of the world.
- The rabbit and the hare have long been associated with fertility, and have therefore been associated with spring and spring festivals. The rabbit as a symbol of Easter seems to have originated in Germany where it was first recorded in writings in the 16th century. The first edible Easter bunnies, made from sugared pastry, were made in Germany in the 19th century.

Anzac Day

Anzac Day is on **April 25** the day the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed at Gallipoli in Turkey in 1915 during World War 1. This day is set apart to hold dear the memory of those who fought for our nation and those who lost their life to war. The day is a public holiday. We remember with ceremonies, wreath laying and military parades. You will find that many towns have an ANZAC Day parade and ceremony culminating in the laying of memorial wreaths at a monument or war memorial. These services can be very moving and a wonderful way of experiencing some Australian National pride, as the memories of our fallen soldiers are commemorated. Many Australians attend the National War Memorial in Canberra, or a War Memorial in one of the Capital Cities around Australia for either the traditional "Dawn Service", which commemorates the landing of the ANZACS at Gallipoli in the dark and dawning of that day, or another service usually commencing around mid-morning with a parade of returned armed forces representing all Australians who have fought in war. As Australia is such a multi-cultural country, these days it is common to see many other countries also represented in these parades.

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

Labor Day

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

Queen's Birthday

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

Melbourne Cup Day

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

Christmas

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

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

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

Many Australians spend Christmas out of doors, going to the beach for the day, or heading to camping grounds for a longer break over the Christmas holiday period. There are often places which have developed an international reputation for overseas visitors to spend Christmas Day in Australia.

One such example is for visitors who are in Sydney at Christmas time to go to Bondi Beach where up to 40,000 people visit on Christmas Day.

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

Christmas in Australia is also associated with two major sporting events:

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

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

(Source: Australian Government – Culture and Recreation Portal)

Home Fire Safety

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

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

Smoke Alarms

When you are sleeping you cannot smell smoke. Smoke alarms save lives. They wake you and alert you to the danger from smoke and fire. You **MUST** have a smoke alarm where you live, it is the law. All homes must have a smoke alarm on each level. Landlords are legally responsible for installation of alarms in rental properties. Tenants are responsible for testing and maintaining alarms.

Look after your smoke alarm. It can save your life.

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

Electricity

The safe use of electricity assists in preventing house fires.

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

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

- **Be careful to keep electrical appliances away from water.**

A hair dryer takes time to cool down. For safety, allow this to happen on a inflammable surface before storing it.

- **Computers, monitors and TVs can overheat and cause fires even when not in use.**

They should be turned off after each session. Good air circulation is necessary around TVs and videos. TVs should be turned off at the set, not only with the remote control.

- **Light globes can become very hot.**

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

Heaters

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

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

Candles, Oil Burners and Cigarettes

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

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

Cooking

Most house fires start in the kitchen.

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

Plan Your Escape

In a Fire:

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

- When outside stay out.
- Call **000**.

(Source: Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Melbourne. www.mfb.vic.gov.au)

Sun Safety

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

Sun Protection

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

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

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

Beach Safety

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

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

F Find the flags and swim between them - the red and yellow flags mark the safest place to swim at the beach.

L Look at the safety signs - they help you identify potential dangers and daily conditions at the beach.

A Ask a surf lifesaver for some good advice - surf conditions can change quickly so talk to a surf lifesaver or lifeguard before entering the water.

G Get a friend to swim with you - so you can look out for each other's safety and get help if needed. Children should always be supervised by an adult.

S Stick your hand up for help - if you get into trouble in the water, stay calm, and raise your arm to signal for help. Float with a current or rip - don't try and swim against it.

And remember – **NEVER**

Never swim at unpatrolled beaches

Never swim at night

Never swim under the influence of alcohol

Never run and dive into the water

Never swim directly after a meal

The Surf Environment

Rips

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

Identifying a Rip

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

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

Surf Skills

Escaping From a Rip

If you are caught in a rip:

- Don't Panic - stay calm
- If you are a strong swimmer, swim at a 45-degree angle across the rip and in the same direction as the current until you reach the breaking wave zone, then return to shore
- If you are a weak or tired swimmer, float with the current, don't fight it. Swim parallel to the shore for about 30 - 40m until you reach the breaking wave zone, then swim back to shore or signal for help.
- Remember to stay calm and conserve your energy.

Negotiating the Surf

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

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

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

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

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

(Source: Surf Lifesaving Australia)

Bush & Outback Safety

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

In the Bush

Be prepared if you plan some time in our bushland. Plan your hike. Always tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to return. Let them know when you return safely.

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

Advice for Motorists Caught in Bush Fires

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

- If you are caught in the middle of a 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.
- Everyone must get down on the floor, below window height and cover all exposed skin with a wool or cotton blanket. Do not use synthetics, which may give off toxic vapours or melt.
- Stay in the vehicle until the fire front has passed. Generally, this will take between 30 seconds and one minute. During this time, it will be hot, noisy and frightening. It will last a short time even though it may seem longer.
- If you have water, drink it.
- Never attempt to drive through smoke or flame. Crashes can occur when drivers run off the road, striking trees or other cars.
- Once the fire front has passed, exit the vehicle and inspect it for damage before proceeding.
- Do not proceed until you are satisfied that the fire has passed and that you are not likely to be trapped a second time.
- Falling trees and branches are a hazard during and after intense fires. Do not park or drive under trees.
- Exit the area as quickly as possible. Remember fire vehicles may be trying to enter the area and your presence may hinder fire-fighting operations.

(Source: NRMA)

In the Outback

Australia's outback is vast. Our remote wilderness areas have few towns and facilities, often with large distances between them, so be aware and plan your trip.

- When planning each day of travel spend some time to calculate how long it will take to drive between destinations. Be realistic about how far you can drive in a day.
- Inform family and friends or the local police of your travel plans. The local police can also provide helpful advice on facilities and road conditions.
- Always carry a current road map.
- Make sure your vehicle is in good working order and has been serviced recently.
- Use a four-wheel drive vehicle on unsealed roads in remote areas. Take extra care when driving these vehicles. For example, drive at reduced speeds on unsealed roads.
- Always carry a spare tyre, tools and water. If travelling to remote areas off major highways take extra food, water, fuel and tyres. Do not overload your vehicle and never carry spare fuel inside an enclosed vehicle.
- **If you have trouble with your vehicle, don't leave your vehicle because it will provide you with shade and protection from the heat. Wait for help to come to you.**
- Hire appropriate emergency communication equipment, such as a satellite phone or an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon device (EPIRB).
- Obey road closure signs and stay on recognised routes.
- Fires in desert and bush areas can spread very quickly. If required, be prepared to evacuate the area immediately.

- Australian wildlife and livestock often graze on the roadside and can stray onto the road. Be very careful when driving at sunrise, sunset and at night, when animals are most active. If an animal crosses in front of you brake gently, do not swerve wildly to avoid it.
- During daylight hours always drive with your headlights on low beam, as outback conditions can make it difficult to see oncoming vehicles.

(Source: Visit Victoria. com)

Storm Safety

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

Severe storms can cause major damage. They may be accompanied by torrential rain, strong winds, large hailstones, loud thunder and lightning. Storms can cause flash flooding, un-roof buildings, and damage trees and power-lines.

You can also be indirectly affected by storms even if your property is not damaged; such as losing power, or access roads being cut.

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

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

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

If you are caught outside during storm:

- Get inside a vehicle or building if possible.
- If no shelter is available, crouch down, with your feet close together and head tucked in.
- If in a group – spread out, keeping people several metres apart.

Dangerous Animals & Plants

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

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

- **Be wary of animals in their natural habitat.** Stay well back from goannas, crocodiles, snakes, dingoes, cassowaries, and also wild pigs, cattle, horses and buffaloes. People have been seriously injured or killed by wild animals. Be very careful about approaching any injured animal, such as kangaroos or possums. They are likely to bite and scratch if you attempt to touch or move them.
- **Never feed or play with wildlife.** Native animals are by nature timid, however, having been provided food from people, may become aggressive in pursuit of food. You may get bitten or scratched. In addition, human foods may be harmful to native animals.

In the warm waters of Tropical Queensland:

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

Bites and Stings

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

The Australia-wide **Poisons Information Centres** have a common telephone number: **131 126**. Some people are allergic to certain insect bites or venom. In the case of an allergic reaction to bites or stings, medical attention should be sought immediately. Call a doctor or hospital for guidance, or **000**.

Anaphylaxis – allergic reactions

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

General First Aid for Bites and Stings

For bites or stings from these creatures seek first aid assistance straight away, stay calm, and as immobile as possible.

- all species of Australian snakes, including sea snakes
- funnel web spiders
- blue ringed octopus
- cone shell stings

For all other bites and stings:

Seek or apply basic first aid.

Wash with soap and water and apply an antiseptic if available

Ensure that the patient's tetanus vaccination is up to date

Apply an ice-pack to reduce local pain and swelling

Pain relief may be required eg. paracetamol or an antihistamine (to reduce swelling, redness and itch)

The patient should seek medical advice if they develop any other symptoms or signs of infection.

www.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre/bits_stings

(Source Queensland Health)