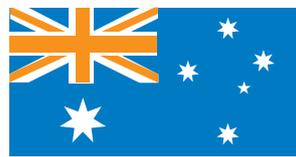
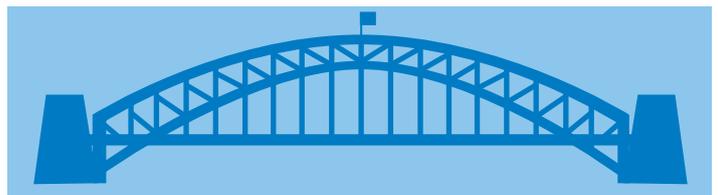


WELCOME TO AFS

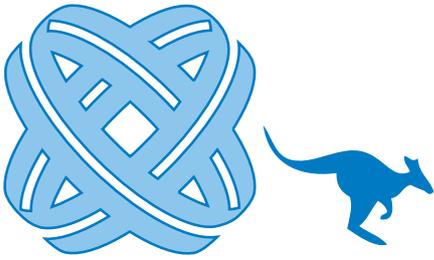
# AUSTRALIA

YOUR GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL EXCHANGE



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

**Intercultural  
Programs**  
*Australia*



**WELCOME TO AFS**

# AUSTRALIA

## Congratulations!!

You are about to start your own unique AFS experience. You have chosen to come to Australia to learn about our customs and language, but also to share with your host family, your school and your AFS local community something about yourself and your own cultural heritage.

Each year AFS makes it possible for hundreds of students from among the 50+ AFS countries to come and live with Australian host families. You will have an opportunity to establish lifelong relationships, enjoy the benefits of improving your English, learn about Australian life in your host community and experience our unique culture.

Your AFS experience will be a time of personal growth and maturity. It will have its good and not so good times and it will demand your effort and interest in adapting to a different way of living. Active participation in your host family is of great importance, as is a commitment to embracing the social and academic opportunities at your host school.

AFS Australia is here to support you and your host family through your AFS Local Group. We encourage you to participate in your AFS Local Group and the activities that are arranged for you and other AFS participants. These aim to enrich your experience. We also encourage you to communicate with your local AFS volunteers, as they and your support person are there to help you adjust to a new way of life.

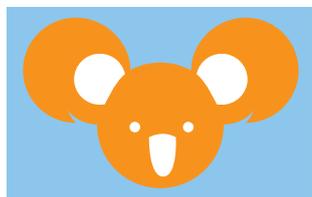
This booklet has been prepared to help you during your time in Australia. It provides you with useful information about the country. It will help guide you through your first days; give you some useful tips on assimilating into your new family and making friends; and explain the rules and policies of AFS Australia. We strongly recommend that you use this booklet as a resource for your stay. Please read it carefully and remember to bring it with you. You will need it at arrival orientation and throughout your stay.

Enjoy your time in Australia and make the most of the opportunities that are available to you to ensure you have a rewarding AFS experience.

From all at AFS Australia

**Support Centre:** AFS Intercultural Programs Australia  
Level 4, 418A Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010  
PO Box 5, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012  
Tel: +61 2 9215 0077 Fax +61 2 9215 0088  
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# AUSTRALIA



Island, Country, Continent

**A**ustralia is much more than kangaroos and the Opera House, as you will soon discover. Take the time to read the contents of this guide carefully, as it contains important and interesting facts about the country.

The name 'Australia' is derived from the Latin *australis* meaning 'southern'. Australia is not just a country. It is an island and a continent unto itself! It is the planet's oldest continent, and has seen little geological activity for more than four billion years. It is also the smallest of the 7 continents but the 6th largest country in the world after Russia, Canada, the United States, China and Brazil.

Australia is almost equal in size to the mainland United States, but has only 22 million people compared to America's 300 million.

Australia is 4 times larger than Indonesia, 15 times larger than Thailand, and 20 times larger than Japan. All of the countries of Western Europe could be rearranged to fit inside it. Not surprisingly, single properties in Australia are larger than some countries. The world's largest cattle station is Strangeroo Springs in South Australia. At 30,028.3 square kilometres, it is almost the size of Belgium!

The big surprise is that Australians live close together.

The interior of the country is arid and sparsely populated with 65% desert, making Australia one of the driest countries on earth. For this reason, 90% of Australians live on only 2.6% of the land, typically in the narrow, fertile coastal plains and on the southeastern coast. Few Australians live in the "outback".

Australia has 36,735 kilometres (22,826 miles) of coastline, and no part of Australia is more than 1000 kilometres from the sea. Australia is also the flattest continent. The single substantial mountain range is the Great Dividing Range running down the eastern (Pacific) seaboard. In the vicinity of the dividing range are lush tropical rainforests and rich farmlands. Toward the north lie waterways full of life.

## Where Is It?

**A**ustralia consists of two land masses: mainland Australia and the island state of Tasmania. Lying southeast of Asia, it is bound by the Pacific Ocean to the east, the Indian Ocean to the west, the Arafura Sea to the north, and the Southern Ocean to the south. Its nearest neighbours are New Zealand to the southeast; Indonesia, East Timor and Papua New Guinea (PNG) to the north, and Vanuatu, New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands to the northeast. It is 4,000 km from east to west and 3,200 km from north to south. The continental and sometimes geopolitical region is known as Oceania and includes Australia, New Zealand, and the Micronesian, Melanesian and Polynesian countries of the Pacific.

## States and Territories

### There are 6 states in Australia:

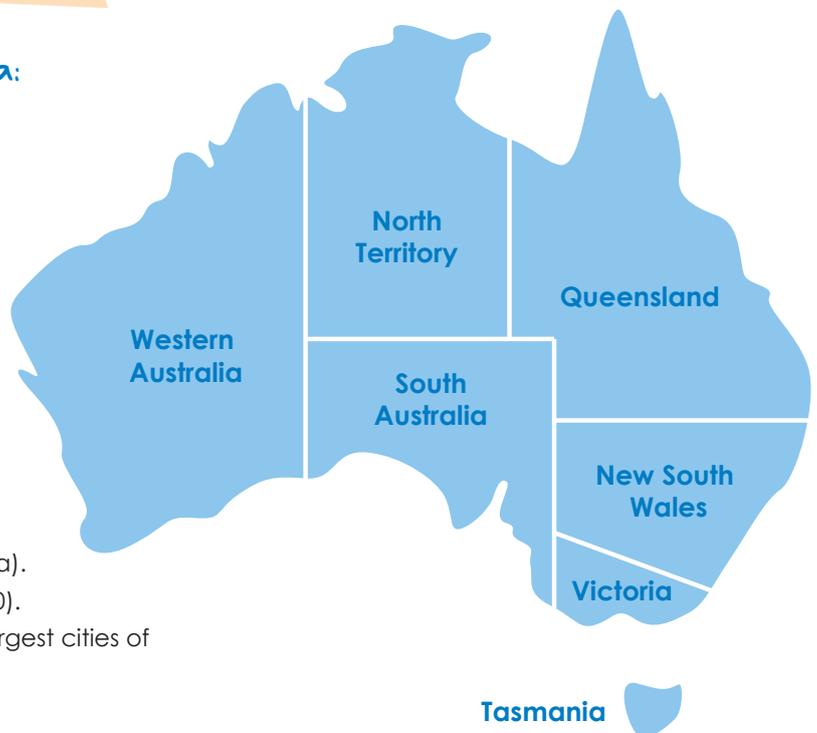
1. New South Wales (capital, Sydney)
2. Queensland (capital, Brisbane)
3. Victoria (capital, Melbourne)
4. South Australia (capital, Adelaide)
5. Western Australia (capital, Perth)
6. Tasmania (capital, Hobart)

### There are 2 main federal territories in Australia:

1. Northern Territory (capital, Darwin)
2. Australian Capital Territory (capital, Canberra).

The capital of Australia is Canberra (pop. 358,200).

It is situated roughly halfway between the two largest cities of Melbourne and Sydney.



### Other Territories

Other territories include the inhabited territories of Christmas Island, Norfolk Island and the Cocos Islands; and the uninhabited Coral Sea Islands, Heard Island and McDonald Islands, Ashmore and Cartier Islands, and the Australian Antarctic Territory.

## Climate

Australian seasons are the opposite of those in Europe and North America – summer starts in December, autumn in March, winter in June and spring in September. Seasonal variations are not extreme and it is rare for temperatures to drop below 0°C. In the north, seasonal variations are even less distinct. Darwin, capital of the Northern Territory, is in the monsoon belt, and has just two seasons: hot and wet and hot and dry.

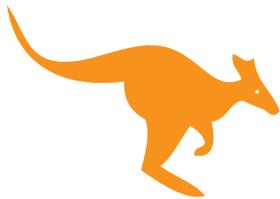
Look at a map of Australia. Find the Tropic of Capricorn. Above it, the weather is tropical. Moving south, it is temperate with increasingly noticeable differences between the seasons, and cooler temperatures in the winter months.

In winter (June-August), daily maximum temperatures can be from 15-24°C (68-75°F). Rain is variable and seasonal, and snow is rare, except for in the southeastern mountains. The southern states of Tasmania and Victoria are typically colder than other states in winter, and the northern areas of Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia are typically much warmer than other areas in winter.

In summer (December-March), the northern states are hotter and wetter, while the southern states are simply hotter, with temperatures up to 41°C (105°F) in Sydney, Adelaide, and Melbourne but generally between 25-33°C (78-90°F).

## Animal & Plant Life

Australia has a fascinating mix of native plants (flora) and animals (fauna) which are truly distinctive in name and appearance. Australia's native flora and fauna are specially suited to the country's climate and landscape. They thrive in the nation's 500 national parks established to protect mountains, rainforests, bush, deserts, coastal dunes and coral reefs. Australia's most well known animal is the kangaroo.



### Kangaroo

The kangaroo is the only large animal to use hopping as its principle means of locomotion. Its hind legs are large and powerful to enable this type of movement and its large muscular tail is used for balance. Some kangaroos hop comfortably at 20-25 km/hour, but can hop as fast as 70km/hour over short distances. Young kangaroos are called 'joeys'.



### Platypu

The platypus is one of the most unusual animals in existence. It is a mammal, however it lays eggs instead of giving birth to its young. Half aquatic, its snout is rubbery and duck-billed and its feet are webbed, while its body and tail are covered with fur.



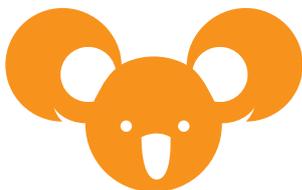
### Echidna

Echidnas resemble small porcupines. They are covered in spines and grow to 30cm in length. They have long, skinny snouts, sticky tongues and short, strong limbs with clawed feet used for digging. They feed on ants and other insects. They are slow, seemingly clumsy creatures that wobble when they walk but actually swim rather well.



### Wombat

Wombats look like small, short-legged bears. They grow to one meter in length. They are nocturnal, generally slow-moving and feed mainly on grasses and roots. They are known for digging extensive burrow systems with their front teeth and powerful front claws.



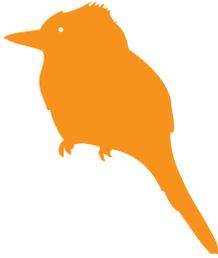
### Koala

The koala lives almost exclusively in eucalyptus trees where they rest for 20 hours and eat 500 grams of eucalyptus leaves a day. The koala gets its name from an Aboriginal word meaning "doesn't drink" because it receives over 90% of its hydration from eating eucalyptus leaves.



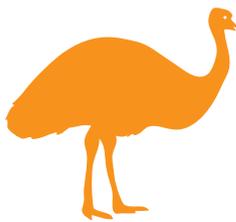
## Dingo

The dingo is a wild dog prevalent in Australia's north but also throughout South East Asia. It is not native to Australia, as is popularly believed. Dingos are lean and muscular with ginger or sand-coloured fur. They have permanently erect ears and do not bark. Dingos will eat small animals like rodents, and larger animals like sheep and kangaroos. The name dingo is an Aboriginal word from the Eora tribe native to Sydney. Dingos were common hunting companions to Aborigines in the past.



## Kookaburra

Australians enjoy the songs, colours and distinctive features of a variety of birds including colourful parrots and cockatoos. The kookaburra is perhaps the most well known of Australia's native birds. Kookaburras are famous for their call, which sounds a great deal like human laughter or cackling.



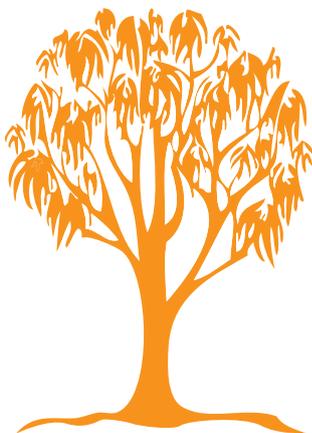
## Emu

The emu is the largest bird native to Australia and the second largest bird in existence after the ostrich. It has tiny wings under its soft, brown feathers but cannot fly. Emus can grow as tall as 2 meters and can weigh as much as 60 kg. Emus are nomadic and travel great distances. They can sprint as fast as 50km/hour.



## Banksia

Australia's plants are equally unusual and have a rugged beauty. They include the wattle, banksias, waratahs, bottlebrushes, paperbarks and tea trees.



## Eucalyptus tree

The eucalyptus tree is the dominant tree in Australia. There are more than 600 species, most native to Australia. No other tree is more closely associated with a particular country, than the eucalypt to Australia.

The essential oil of the eucalyptus is a powerful natural disinfectant used in cleaning and deodorising products. It is also used in small quantities in many over-the-counter cold and cough medications. On hot days, the oil vaporises and creates a blue haze in the Australian sky.

The oil is also highly flammable – being the catalyst for many Australian bush fires. Interestingly, these trees are well adapted to periodic bush fires and many species rely on these fires to propagate and regenerate, which they can do very quickly after a fire.

The eucalypt is expert at drawing water from soil at the expense of other plants and so easily dominates the Australian plant life in every region of the country.

Many species are also known as gum trees, box trees, stringybarks and ironbarks.



# AUSTRALIA



At a Glance

## Population

The population of Australia is just over 22 million. The most populous states are New South Wales and Victoria, and their respective capital cities, Sydney and Melbourne, are Australia's most populous cities. Australia is a highly urbanised society with about 85% of the population living in or near the 10 largest cities.

Australian society is also very multicultural. After World War II, Australia experienced large immigration from Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Lebanon and Turkey; while British immigration to Australia has always been high. In recent decades, immigration from Asia has increased and new migrants have come from Africa and the Middle East. Today 25% of the population (5 million) of Australia is foreign born – from Great Britain, New Zealand and Italy predominantly. 94% of the population is of European descent, 4% (800,000) of Asian descent, and 1.5% (300,000) are indigenous – either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The Aboriginal population of Australia represents the oldest continuously surviving human society on earth. Aborigines existed in almost total isolation for 60,000 years. They have no written history, so fragments of their Dreamtime stories, cave paintings, etchings and oral history remain to tell the story of their remarkable past. Indigenous communities are most strongly represented in NSW (with the highest population), QLD, NT (where there is the heaviest concentration), and WA. Aboriginal lifestyles vary from traditional tribal styles in the north to urban styles in the major cities

## Language

English is the official language of Australia, although 282 foreign languages are spoken, including 170 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Chinese, Italian and Greek are the most commonly spoken second languages. Australia is famous for its colourful and creative 'slang'. Aussie slang and the Australian accent, which varies slightly from region to region distinguish Australian English from other forms. Australian and British English spellings are the same and differ slightly from American English spellings.

## Religion

Only 68% percent of Australians are Christians. 21% are Anglican (Church of England), 27% are Catholic, and 21% are members of other Christian denominations. Other religions include Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and Hinduism and are practiced by 5% of the population. At least 15% of Australians are secular.

## Government

The Commonwealth of Australia is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government. As an independent member of the British Commonwealth, the Head of State is Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain who is represented by a Governor General in Australia. The Head of Government is the Prime Minister who is leader of the party or coalition of parties holding a majority in the federal parliament.

There are two houses in parliament: the House of Representatives (lower house) and the Senate (upper house). The parliamentary system is repeated on the state and territorial levels. The two major political parties in Australia are the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. Other parties include the National Party, the Green Party and the Australian Democrats.

## Public Holidays

The following are national holidays held in Australia in 2012. There are additional public holidays in each state. Ask your host family for more information about these and other holidays.

<b>1 January</b>	<b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>6 April</b>	<b>Good Friday</b>
<b>9 April</b>	<b>Easter Monday</b>	<b>11 June (except WA)</b>	<b>Queen's Birthday</b>
<b>25 December</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>26 December</b>	<b>Boxing Day</b>

### Specifically Australian Public Holidays

#### Australia Day / 26 January

Australia's official national day, celebrating the arrival of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove on January 26, 1788. The First Fleet brought English convicts to Australia to establish a penal colony.

#### ANZAC Day / 25 April

A day in remembrance of the courage and sacrifice of ANZAC soldiers in World War I and of all soldiers in subsequent wars. ANZAC stands for Australia and New Zealand Army Corps.

## Quick Facts for the Traveller

### Electricity

20-240V 50Hz

### Time Zones

GMT/UTC +10 (Eastern Standard Time)

in NSW, ACT, VIC, TAS and QLD

GMT/UTC +9.5 (Central Time) in SA and NT

GMT/UTC +8 (Western Time) in WA

In summer, clocks are pushed forward one hour in NSW, VIC, TAS and SA.

### Telephone Calls

#### State Area Codes

02 Australian Capital Territory	07 Queensland
02 New South Wales	08 Northern Territory
03 Victoria	08 South Australia
03 Tasmania	08 Western Australia

**Country Code:** 61      **Dialling out of Australia:** 0011 +

**Emergency Call in Australia:** 000

Fire, Police, Ambulance

## Currency

Australian units of currency are 'Dollars' and 'Cents'. They come in the form of 'Notes' or 'Coins'. The currency is the Australian dollar, which is divisible into 100 cents.

Australian money is made of silver (cent coins), gold (dollar coins) and plastic (notes). Notes come in a variety of colours. Coins display the image of Queen Elizabeth II and on the reverse, images of Australian wildlife, culture and people.

In Australia there are ATM's (Automatic Teller Machines) in all areas. ATM's generally dispense money in \$20 and \$50 notes. EFTPOS (electronic funds transfer) is also available in all areas. Most cards are accepted, but check with your bank.

Limit the amount of cash you keep on your person in general. \$100 should be sufficient to cover minor expenses and purchases from your arrival in Australia through your first week.

Coins	Notes
5 cents	5 dollars
10 cents	10 dollars
20 cents	20 dollars
50 cents	50 dollars
1 dollars	100 dollars
2 dollars	

Exchange rates fluctuate, but an Australian dollar is generally equivalent to the values indicated. Consult any currency converter on the Internet for current exchange rates with your country's currency.

### Approximate Exchange Rates (2012)

1 Australian Dollar (AUD)	.97 US
	.63 EURO
	.84 JPY

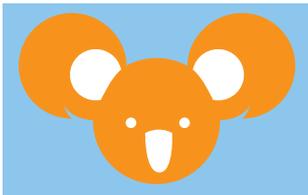
Prices of goods and services vary from state to state and within states from city to country town. The larger cities like Sydney and Melbourne are more expensive than country towns. Here are some examples of what you can expect to pay in Australia for:

Common Purchases	Approximate Prices (Australian Dollar)
Mail within Australia	\$0.60
International Airmail	\$2.00 - \$3.00
Public transportation within a given city	\$1.80 - \$5.00
Soft Drink or Juice	\$3.00 - \$4.00
Fast food	\$6.00 - \$15.00
Movie Ticket	\$12.00 - \$25.00
Music Concert	\$80.00 - \$150.00
Sporting Event	\$40.00 - \$70.00
Jeans	\$75.00 - \$125.00
Shirts	\$20.00 - \$100.00



Life in

# AUSTRALIA



## Culture and People

Australians are a diverse people and one should avoid applying or believing stereotypes. However, the following information can serve you well as a guide to understanding many Australians in general. Australians may do and say things that you will consider strange. Even if you feel uncomfortable at first, slowly but surely, you will become accustomed to our behaviour, attitudes and way of life.

### Saying What You Mean

Australians are open and straightforward. Part of being open is saying what you mean. When Australians say "No" in reply to a question or a request, they mean "No". There is no bargaining. Australians are offended when people bargain and behave as though "No" means "Maybe".

### Personality and Public Behaviour

Australians are laid-back and down-to-earth. They tend to be informal in conversation, dress and relations with others. Australians are also famous for their friendliness. They often smile to strangers and always when they meet someone new. Strangers and friends alike may be greeted with a 'G'day', 'Hi' or 'How are you going?' when passed in the street. When meeting new people, adults give firm handshakes and look people in the eyes. Teens may smile or nod.

Australians are also polite and respectful in public. Sniffing, spitting and swearing in public are not acceptable. Australians are famous for their humility. They do not boast about their achievements. They usually prefer to understate their accomplishments and do not like when people talk a lot about their own successes or talents.

### Attitudes

In general, Australia is a nation that is tolerant and respectful of others, and Australians frown upon those who lack tolerance for other people's opinions, beliefs or way of life. Australian law prohibits discrimination on the basis of culture, race, sexuality, gender, wealth and disability.

Australians are also strongly egalitarian. Wait staff at restaurants, taxi drivers, bank tellers, shop attendants and all other customer service professionals are treated with respect and as equals. You will be viewed negatively if you treat service people as if they are beneath you.

Australian society is tolerant, but still rather conservative, especially in smaller communities. Short skirts, revealing tops and heavy makeup among teenage girls may be considered inappropriate, as may young men who go out in public without shirts or shoes. Tattoos and body piercings, while not uncommon in especially larger cities may offend some in both large and small communities.

## Communication

'Please' and 'Thank you' are used excessively. Learn these three words before learning any others! Australians consider it rude when people do not say 'Please' when they ask for something and 'Thank you' when they are given something. This applies to almost any situation: at home, school, at a restaurant or shop – everywhere. Get into the habit of using these words.

Australians also say 'Sorry' frequently for even the smallest things, and think it is rude when others do not also say it. If you forget to do something, bump into someone, or many other small things, remember to say "Sorry."

The typical Australian response to both 'Thank you' or 'Sorry' is 'No worries'. Australians do not typically say 'You're welcome', so do not be offended if they do not say this when you say 'Thank you'. 'No worries' means 'You're welcome' and many other things, like 'It's okay', 'It was no trouble', 'I don't mind', etc.

Australians also use names quite often when they are talking to each other. They feel more relaxed when people speak to them by name. The following is an example of how Australians use names, 'Please', 'Thank you', and 'No worries' in conversation.

### Example 1 (At school)

Peter: "Excuse me please, Mary. Have you seen Clare?"

Mary: "Yes Peter. She's in the library."

Peter: "Thanks."

Mary: "No worries."

### Example 2 (At dinner in the home)

John: "Mum, would you please pass the butter?" (Mum passes the butter)

John: "Thanks."

### Example 3 (In class at school)

Sam: "Dan, may I borrow your pen?"

Dan: "Sure."

(Sam uses the pen and returns it).

Sam: "Here's your pen Dan. Thanks."

Dan: "Thanks mate."

### Example 4 (Parent and child)

Sally: "Dad, I have a problem. Would you help me please?"

Dad: "Of course, Sally. What's the trouble?"

(Dad helps Sally).

Sally: "Thanks very much Dad. You've helped me a lot."

Dad: "Any time sweetheart."

Listen to your host family, strangers, and kids at school to hear more examples of how often these words are used, and when you should use them.

Remember to use 'Please' and 'Thank you,' when appropriate, with everyone – including your host family, strangers, shopkeepers, and other teenagers. Australians treat everyone equally.



## Humour

Each group of people has its own sense of humour. People who speak the same language do not always laugh at the same jokes. Australians are famous for their sarcastic, dead-pan humour. Even if you speak English well, you may find Australian humour surprising.

Australians use humour a great deal when they talk to each other. Sometimes they make an amusing statement early in a conversation in order to create a relaxed feeling. When a conversation is serious, they might say something funny to make the atmosphere calm and to help everyone to deal with the issue.

Australians usually find it easy to laugh at themselves and do so often. If someone makes a small mistake, such as dropping and breaking a glass in the kitchen, that person will probably make a joke about being clumsy instead of becoming upset and embarrassed.

Australians also laugh at each other. They tease each other. This is called "knocking" or "rubbishing" and is a sign of informal friendship. It can also be intended to ensure someone does not see him or herself as overly important, so is sometimes directed as a joke at public figures and institutions.

## Wealth

Although there is some obvious wealth and poverty in Australia, the majority of people consider themselves "middle class". They are either renting or buying their home with a mortgage. They usually have at least one car, a washing machine and a television. They may or may not have a dishwasher, an electric clothes dryer and a computer with Internet access. To own these things and to pay for the expenses of daily life, Australians have to save and spend their money carefully. Even if their possessions make them appear wealthy, they probably have very little money left over and do not consider themselves "well off".

Australians, whatever their wealth, are concerned about how much water and petrol they use. Australia suffers from frequent droughts and so water consumption is monitored closely – including how long they spend in the shower. Do not take long showers in Australia. Australians consider petrol prices very high and are careful not to drive more than is required. Telephone calls are also expensive in Australia. Australians are charged for every local telephone call they make. International calls are very expensive. Remember to ask your host family the rules about water consumption, making domestic and international telephone calls, and using the Internet. Remember also that your host family may consider the price of petrol when deciding whether or not to use the family car.

In Australian society, there is almost no class distinction. Australians have informal, egalitarian relationships with a variety of people who, in countries where society is more structured, might be separated by class barriers.

## Drinking and Smoking

While Australians have a reputation for enjoying beer, it is against Australian law for a person under 18 years to drink alcohol in public or purchase alcoholic beverages. Teenagers under 18 do not participate actively in pub/bar culture. The purchase of cigarettes by a person under 18 years is also against Australian law. Smoking is not allowed in restaurants, cafes, school, public transport and public buildings and is increasingly frowned upon as Australia becomes more health-conscious and respectful of the rights of non-smokers.

## Table Manners

Australians generally eat three meals a day and do not eat snacks between meals. Ask your host parents the rules on what you can eat between meals.

Australians generally eat dinner together in early evening. They may eat around a kitchen or dining room table or they may eat together in front of the television while they watch a program. When they eat together around a table, they talk to one another about work, school and the events of the day. Many Australian families consider dinner around a table the best opportunity of the day to talk their kids.

At meals, Australians use a knife, fork and spoon to eat in the same manner as Europeans. They close their mouths when they eat, do not make loud chewing noises and do not burp. They eat all the food on their plates, unless they did not like the food or have eaten too much and are full. They request small servings if they are not very hungry.

If you do not like the food, apologise for not liking the food, explain that it is quite different than what you are used to (if true), and thank your host parents for having made you dinner. Be sure to eat what portions of the meal you do like. Be sure to remain at the table even if you are not eating. Australians often wait until everyone has finished eating before leaving the table.

After dinner, everyone in the family usually takes their dishes to the kitchen, discards unwanted food in the garbage, and rinses them off in the sink before washing them. Everyone also helps clear the table of leftover food and other things. Always offer to help clean up after dinner. It is considered very polite.

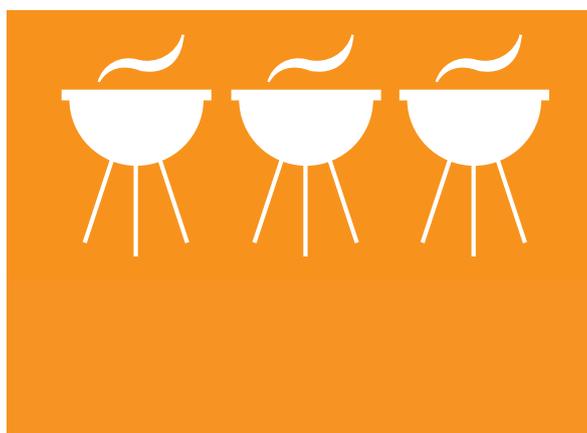
## Cleanliness and Hygiene

Australians wash their hands every time after using the toilet. They also wash their hands before dinner. Australians take a shower (or bath) once a day, sometimes twice. They wash their hair several times a week. They put on clean underwear and usually a clean shirt every day. They may wear a pair of pants a few times before washing them. Men and women both wear deodorant under their arms.

Used toilet tissue is flushed down the toilet in Australia. Do not discard it in waste baskets.

## Feminine Hygiene

Women generally shave their legs and underarms. During menstruation, they use sanitary napkins or tampons. Young, unmarried girls are permitted to use tampons. Girls should ask their host mothers or sisters the best way to discard of these products to be sure they comply with local custom. Australian women do not find the topic of menstruation embarrassing.



## Family Life

### Being an AFS student starts... with your host family.

Living with an Australian family will be an interesting and rewarding experience. Aussie families, like families everywhere, are unique. They have their own values and characteristics that make them special. Aussie families come in all shapes and sizes. Some lead very quiet lives, others are very busy and their households noisy. Some take frequent trips or outings, while others spend most of their time at home. Both parents may work outside the home, or only one. Many families have only one parent while others have unmarried parents. All are normal Australian families.



### Diversity

Australia is a multicultural society with families from diverse cultural backgrounds. Your host family may speak English and a second language at home and serve Australian as well as foreign foods. Families also come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Your host family may be wealthy and own a large home, or they may be working class, and have a modest home or apartment (flat). All of our families have volunteered to welcome you into their homes and families and are not paid to do so. Whatever they have, they have offered to share with you, and AFS expects you to appreciate their generosity and hospitality.

### Family Roles

In Australia parents and children usually live together alone – not with grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins. Australian families can be more matriarchal than, for example, some Latin or Asian families. Mothers tend to make the everyday decisions regarding what children can or cannot do. They also tend to discipline children more. Even if you are not accustomed to mothers setting rules, their authority should be respected and heeded in Australia.

Children are expected to respect and obey their parents and their authority, but may disagree with them or respectfully question the rules they impose. Australians do not have special pronouns to show respect to older people. Children will address their parents as 'Mum' and 'Dad'. Aunts and uncles may be referred to as 'Auntie' (Auntie Mary, e.g.) and 'Uncle' (Uncle Jack, e.g.). Aunts and uncles may also simply be called by their first names. There are many nicknames used for grandparents. Other adults may be called by their first names or addressed by their surnames with the titles 'Mr.' (for men), 'Mrs.' (for married women), and 'Ms.' (for single women).

Younger brothers and sisters do not show special respect to their older siblings, nor do younger students show respect to older students at school. All kids are equal.

Children are generally independent and given room to experience life and make mistakes, but within limits, and in keeping with their ages. When parent(s) are at work, Australian teenagers often take care of themselves and their younger siblings. Some even work as well, part-time.



## Expressing Affection

Australians are family-oriented but may not be as physically expressive as families in, for example, Latin or Mediterranean cultures. Family members generally hug each other, but not necessarily every day. Kissing on the cheek is not as popular in Australian families or between Australian friends, as it is in some European cultures, for example. Australians more often express their affection through smiles, nods and pats on the back.

Affection in families is often expressed by families doing things together, such as watching TV; working around the house or garden; having picnics and barbecues; and going to sporting events, to the movies, to the beach, on hikes, on bike rides and on camping trips. Be prepared for the possibility that your host family will express affection differently than your natural family.

Smiles and laughter are signs of strong affection in Aussie families. Family members may even tease one another, but will do so in good fun, in keeping with Aussie humour!

## Communication

Australian families appreciate open communication and honest discussions. Young people are encouraged to discuss their activities and their problems with their parents. Your host parents will expect you to communicate with them about your experiences and impressions and to be an open and active member of the family. Quiet and withdrawn behaviour is often interpreted as unfriendly.

Australians often speak loudly or shout. Children sometimes shout at their parents. Parents sometimes seem angry because they are shouting, but are not angry – they are just shouting! This can be difficult to get used to for students coming from families where communication is quiet, calm and governed by set rules for showing respect.

Australians often look into each other's eyes when they are talking. It is okay for young people to look into their parents' eyes and the eyes of teachers and other adults, when speaking to them. Australians think this is a sign of honesty. It is also okay to look into their eyes when listening to them. This is a sign you are paying attention. Turning away when someone is speaking to you can be seen as disrespectful.

## The Home

Most Australians live in a house, which they are renting or buying through a mortgage. With the exception of families who live on a farm, the house is usually on a small piece of land in a city suburb or on the outskirts of a town. Because houses are very expensive, a growing number of people, especially young people, live in apartments.

Many Australian families, especially those who host with AFS, live in towns that are quite small, or on large farms or properties far from town centres. Whether you are placed in a small town, on a farm or in a big city or suburb, each environment offers a uniquely Australian experience with its own advantages and disadvantages. If you are committed to having a rewarding experience, accept the environment in which you are placed and learn to make the best of it. In each environment, there may be special things to see and do not available elsewhere.

## Privacy

Many Australian children share a bedroom with a same-sex sibling and do not have complete privacy. Do not expect to have your own room. You may have to share a room with a sibling much younger than you. You should try to accept this and learn to live with your new sibling.

Most bedroom doors do not have locks. When a door is closed, Australians usually knock and wait for a reply before entering. A closed door may mean "Do not come in" until you knock and are invited. Your host parents or siblings may get upset if you open a door to a room without knocking and being invited to enter. Australian families may have only one or two bathrooms in their homes that are shared. You may share a bathroom with a host sibling of the opposite sex or even with your host parents. Most bathroom doors also do not have locks. Always remember to knock and wait for a reply before entering.

## House Work

In Aussie homes, everyone shares in the housework – including fathers and sons. Fathers and sons may cook dinner, wash dishes, make beds, take out the garbage and clean bathrooms. Most Australian families do not have housekeepers, cooks, or nannies.

In some families, mothers may do most of the housework; but this does not mean Australians consider house work 'women's work'. They do not! Each family decides who will do what depending upon what works best for them. Some parents want their children to focus on school, and some fathers work long hours, so the mothers do much of the housework. Other families consider it important that children learn how to take care of themselves, and require them to wash their own clothes, learn to cook, take out the garbage and help with outside work.

You will likely be expected to share in all of the housework. You will most likely be expected to keep your room clean. Many Australian young people do not have clean and tidy rooms, but parents (especially mothers) do expect you to clean it yourself. If you do not keep your room clean, your host parents may clean it for you and may not consider doing so an invasion of your privacy.

## Rules

Families often have 'family rules'. Most children must check with their parents before making plans to go out alone or with friends. Your host parents may want to know where you are and with whom, at all times. This is not uncommon. Your host parents are responsible for you while you are in Australia and may be protective.

Most Australian parents do not approve of their children smoking, even if a parent smokes. It is illegal for minors (under 18) to purchase cigarettes and smoking is increasingly frowned upon in Australian society as Australians become more health-conscious. Most Australian parents also frown upon underage drinking (under 18) and underage sexual activity.

## Pets

Many Australian families have pets, as Australians are great lovers of animals. Dogs and cats are beloved pets and may live indoors like smaller members of the family! In rural and semi-rural areas, families may have cows, chickens ('chooks'), horses and other pets. You may also have the opportunity to sight some of Australia's fascinating wildlife in more rural placements.

## Work

The Australian work week is Monday through Friday, and the average Australian works 8 hours per day – usually between the hours of 8:00/9:00am and 4:00/5:00pm with a 30 minute to 1 hour lunch. Almost 60% of adult women work at least part-time in Australia compared to a little more than 70% of adult men. Both working mothers and stay-at-home mothers are common. The unemployment rate in Australia is approximately 5%.

If you have a host mother and a father, both parents may work full or part-time. If your host parents are farmers, they make work longer or different hours and if they are doctors or nurses or some other professionals, they make work in shifts at varying times of day. Your host siblings may also work part-time. As an exchange student under a student visa you are allowed to work for up to 20 hours per week for monetary compensation while in Australia without special permission.



## Teen Life

Australian teen life is varied and dependent upon the local environment. Common pastimes include television, movies, music, concerts, shopping, video and computer games, chatting online and on mobile phones, parties, hiking, camping, beach activities, and sport. Many young people also work part time after school and on weekends to earn their own spending money.

Dancing at discos and clubs is not as common in Australia as it is in some countries for teenagers, and may not be widely available or popular in your community for people under 18. Australian teenagers under 18 do not go to pubs or other establishments where alcohol is served. Australian teenagers also do not frequent cafes as often as teenagers in some European and Latin countries, but coffee drinking and trips to cafes are not uncommon and are becoming more popular.

Australian teenagers can drive at 17 but may rely on public transportation, especially in cities. Young people may take public buses and trains alone, walk or ride a bike.

Male and female teenagers will socialise together and separately. It is not unusual for a boy and girl to spend time together just as friends, or to be affectionate just as friends.

What about clubs? There are youth groups of various kinds: Scouts, religious, athletic, volunteer, special interest, etc. A great way to meet other teenagers is to look for such a group that shares your interests.

Australian teenagers are very communicative. Try not to be shy. If you are friendly, smiling, interested in other people, and not afraid to talk, you will find a place for yourself among Australian teenagers.

## School

Schools around the world have a lot in common: teachers, desks, homework, exams, etc. They are a place where teenagers make friends, learn, and prepare for life as an adult.

There are things that make schools in each country different. Why? Because each country has its own history, culture, and way of educating its young people.

## Your Responsibilities as a Student

To obtain your Australian visa, you were required to have your natural parents sign an Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Students form issued by the Department of Education in the state in which you will attend school. In submitting this form, you agreed to come to Australia as a student, not a tourist. You are therefore required to abide by certain rules:

To attend school full-time;

To ensure your school work is done and to show progress;

To respect the school rules; and

To behave cooperatively in school.

AFS students may not be given credit for schoolwork performed while on exchange, and you may have already graduated from high school in your home country. Nevertheless, as exchange students with student visas, you are required to attend all classes, complete all schoolwork, and take your role as a student seriously. If you fail to meet any of your responsibilities as an exchange student, your school may report you to AFS. Your student visa can be cancelled and you will return home.

Please remember that you are a student in Australia, not a tourist. Unexplained absence from school is a violation of your student visa. Don't underestimate the value of studying hard even if you are not receiving credit. You may follow other AFS students who have found that school in Australia helped their future studies and careers.

## Australian Schools

Will you like school in Australia? Yes, if you are ready for it to be different and are willing to understand those differences and not be critical of them.

There are 12 years of primary and secondary school in Australia, with the years being numbered 1 through 12. Australian youth are required to attend school from the beginning of the year of their 6th birthday to the end of the year of their 17th birthday. This means Australians must attend school until Year 10. High school runs from Year 7 (age 12) to Year 10. Approximately 10% of Australian students leave school at the end of Year 10.

Senior high school runs from Year 11 to Year 12. In Years 11 and 12, students prepare for a certificate that confirms they have completed their secondary education. It is based on school assessment plus (except for Queensland) the results of examinations held at the end of Year 12. The results of these exams determine university entrance.

In Australia, there are government schools ('public') and non-government schools ('private' or 'independent'). The Australian government heavily finances government schools. Independent and private schools rely more heavily on tuition fees charged to students' families. Most private and independent schools were established by religious denominations. Approximately 75% of Australian secondary students attend government schools.

There are coeducational and single-sex schools. Students at single-sex schools have plenty of opportunities to meet the opposite sex – even though they are not in class together.

In most government and non-government schools students must wear uniforms. If you are not used to this, it can be a bit of a shock at first, but one that is easily forgotten when everyone else is dressing the same way. Students pay for their own uniforms as they are personal clothing.

## Curricula

Each state and territory has its own system of education that is directed by its own Department of Education.

The range of subjects taught varies in each school; however, required subjects include English, history, geography, maths, physics and chemistry. Electives may include music, drama and photography, to name a few. In senior high school (Years 11 and 12) most subjects are electives, but students continue to study English.

Most AFS students are enrolled in Year 11, as Year 12 in Australia is principally devoted to assessment and preparation for the high school certificate and is therefore not an appropriate year in which to place exchange students. Only academically advanced exchange students with good language skills, high motivation, and a good justification, may enter year 12 with special permission.

As a Year 11 student, you will have a choice with regards to subjects studied. You will have the opportunity to study subjects not available to you at home, including subjects that teach you about Australia. In most schools some form of sport is compulsory and you will have the opportunity to take part in other sporting activities of your choice. While most schools offer a wide range of subjects, there are specialised schools that concentrate, for example, on agriculture, music, performing arts, or technical skills.

## School Year

School terms vary from state to state, but generally run from late January/early February to mid-December. The school year is divided into four terms (**three terms in Tasmania**) with short holidays in approximately early April, late June and late September:

Late January / Early February to April  
April to June / July  
June / July to September  
October to December

The school day generally runs from 8:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### Q.How do I get to school?

You may have to walk if you live near your school. You may take the bus or train alone if it is available, you may ride a bicycle (helmet required), or you may be driven by car by a host parent.

### Q.Who pays for what?

AFS is responsible for your general tuition fees for core subjects and required books. If you must take public transport to school, AFS may also provide financial assistance.

Your host family is responsible for providing you three meals a day. Most students will bring lunch from home – usually a sandwich or other cold lunch. Your host family will provide food for you to make your lunch to take to school.

You are responsible for paying for your school uniform as it is personal clothing; pieces of your sport uniform if you choose to join a sport team; snacks purchased at school; pens, pencils and paper; fee and materials for elective courses like photography; and fees for optional school trips and excursions. Suggestion: Ask your host family for photos of the pieces of clothing that make up the school uniform so you can see if there is anything, particularly shoes, you can bring with you.

### Q.What rules will the school have?

Schools and teachers are responsible for all students' welfare and safety. Therefore, all schools will have some special rules. Students need permission to leave the classroom or the school building. Teachers expect students to be on time for class. If you are late, sick or absent you are expected to have a written letter from your host parents giving the reason. You should check out your school rules within the first week.

### Q.What if I have a problem at school?

- Talk to your host family.
- Talk to your teacher/ year adviser.
- Talk with your AFS support contact.
- Talk with your friends at school.



## Sport

Australians are often accused of being sports crazy and it's true!

The generally sunny and pleasant climate and relatively low-cost access to sporting facilities encourage Australians to take up outdoor activities as part of their lifestyles. There are more than 120 national sporting organisations and thousands of state and regional clubs. An estimated 6.5 million people are registered sport participants. Australians of all ages play sport competitively, for exercise or for fun.

Australians are also enthusiastic spectators. Football ("footy") in its various forms (Rugby League, Rugby Union and Australian Rules) is the major winter sport and footy matches draw large crowds. The different forms of football vary in popularity from state to state. The major summer sports are cricket and tennis, and many international tests and matches are played.

Swimming, surfing, sailing, tennis, basketball, netball, yachting, cycling, soccer and golf are also popular and many other sports, including martial arts, are sure to have supporters and/or representation in Australia. You may have opportunities to play sport through school or through local community sport clubs or centres. Ask your host family about local opportunities.

## Diet and Meals

Australian cuisine has evolved in large part from British and continental cuisine. Popular foods include meat pies, sausage rolls, fish and chips and lamb. American-style fast food is also very common. However in recent history, Australian cuisine has expanded to include sushi, kebabs, and a host of other foods and dishes, as Australia has become more ethnically diverse.

Eating habits vary among families and communities and will often depend on the degree of ethnic diversity in your community, but habits have diversified across the country to include Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Lebanese, Italian, Greek, Turkish, Indian and other cuisines. Still, you may find yourself in a community with predominantly native-born Australians who continue to prefer meat pies, fish and chips, barbecue and lamb.

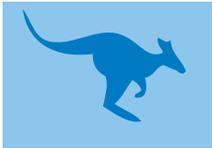
Australians may not cook every day. Take-away food is very popular in the larger cities especially, though a sunny day is always an excuse to barbecue at home. Meat remains a staple of the typical Australian dinner, along with vegetables and starches (bread or potatoes). Breakfast on weekdays may be as simple as coffee and toast or cereal and juice. Large breakfasts of bacon, sausage, eggs, toast, etc. are more common on weekends.

Lunch is an important meal every day but is not a heavy meal – usually a sandwich. Morning and afternoon tea are not uncommon and may consist of tea, coffee or juice and a very light snack. Australians are fond of salty snacks like potato chips or 'crisps', sweet foods like lollies ('candy'), bikkies ('cookies') and cakes, and soft drinks (Coke, e.g.)



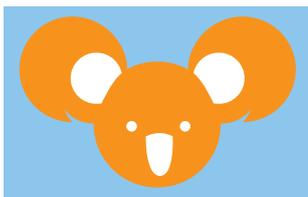
### WHAT IS VEGEMITE?

Vegemite is a savoury spread derived from brewer's yeast. It has a very salty taste and is high in Vitamin B. It has been an Australian icon for 75 years that most children grow up eating. Try it!



Preparing For Your

# AFS EXPERIENCE



Students who prepare for their exchange before leaving their native countries have the best experience. Your preparation should begin with English language study and practice. You will be expected to speak and understand basic English from the moment you arrive. Make every effort to learn at least basic tourist English.

To further familiarise yourself with life in Australia, make use of your local library and the Internet. A lot of general information is available about Australia and its culture.

Although each participant's experience is unique and depends on your host family, host school and community, we strongly suggest that you speak with a recent AFS participant to Australia. This person will be an excellent resource of information about living life as an Australian. If you don't know any returnees, please contact your local volunteer or national AFS office.

## Common Misconceptions about Australia from AFS Students

Many AFS students who have been hosted in Australia have had made similar assumptions about Australia and have been surprised to find their assumptions unfounded or only partially true.

### Assumption:

"Australia is a land of sparsely populated, vast, beautiful spaces."

### Truth:

Australia is indeed a sparsely populated continent with vast, beautiful spaces; however, the majority of Australians are concentrated in the major cities and surrounding small towns. You may find yourself in an urban environment not unlike those in your native country, a suburb, a small town, a semi-rural community, or a farming community. You may be hosted in an area with access to and views of vast, beautiful, natural landscapes or you may find yourself in an area with limited views of and access to such spaces.

**Assumption:**

“Australia is a land of beautiful beaches and I will live near the beach.”

**Truth:**

Australia is famous for its stunning beaches and with 36,735 km of coastline, Australia boasts many. However, many of the communities that host exchange students do not live near the beach. You may find yourself living very far from the beach, or the nearest beach may be no more than a walk away.

**Assumption:**

“All Australians have kangaroos in their backyard and there are koalas in all the trees.”

**Truth:**

Like wildlife in most countries, kangaroos and koalas are not commonly found in cities, suburban environments or small towns. If you are hosted near a zoo or wildlife reserve, you may have the opportunity to see these native animals. Many Australians have never seen these animals in the wild if they do not live near the bush or wildlife reserves.

**Assumption:**

“Australians are blond with blue eyes.”

**Truth:**

Australians of British origin may have blond hair and blue eyes, but as the country has become increasingly more ethnically diverse, there is no longer an “Australian look”. Native Australians now look like they may have parents or grandparents from any of the world’s countries. Indigenous Australians also do not have a single “look”. Your host family may not look at all like you imagined Australians to look: they may not even be originally from Australia.

**Assumption:**

“Australians are rugged and enjoy spending their time in the outback.”

**Truth:**

Australia is a highly urbanised society. Many Australians enjoy leaving the city and small towns for camping, hiking, and trekking. As many however, do not, and prefer artistic, musical, organised athletic and home-based leisure activities.



### Assumption:

"Sydney is Australia's main attraction, and I can visit it during my exchange. I will also visit Ayer's Rock and the Great Barrier Reef."

### Truth:

Sydney is one of the great seaports of the world, but it is only one of many great destinations in Australia. Ayer's Rock and the Great Barrier Reef are geological wonders, but there are incredible landscapes and distinctive plant and animal life throughout the country. There is no place like Australia on earth, and having seen any part of it, will have been an experience.

The distances between Ayer's Rock (Uluru), the Great Barrier and Sydney are vast. Travelling to any of these places can be a long and expensive trip, depending upon where you are hosted.

Even though there may be some opportunities to travel with AFS trips or independently with your host family during the school holidays, your AFS exchange is not a vacation or opportunity for you to backpack across the country, and your attendance at school throughout the year is mandatory.

### Assumption:

"My Australian host family is there to show me a good time. They are supposed to give me all of their attention, to show me all around the host community, to take me on trips all over the country, and to treat me like I am special."

### Truth:

Your host family chose to host you because they want you to live with them as a member of their family. They may not give you any more attention than they do their other children, if they have any. They want to teach you about their way of life and hope you will like living with them. Their way of life may not involve frequent or any trips. They may not have the time or the money to show you all around the community, state, or country. They will involve you in their life – not change their life to show you a good time. They are not your tour guides any more than your own family is!

### Assumption:

"My Australian family chose to host me because they are interested in learning more about my country."

### Truth:

Many Australian families will choose a student from a particular nationality because they are interested in the country, its culture or its language. However, other families choose students from countries of which they know little. These families are hosting because they want to introduce you to Australian culture. Do not be offended if your host family does not ask you many questions about your country. Do not be offended if they do not know much about your country. Just because they are not curious about your country does not mean they are not curious about you.



### Assumption:

"My Australian host family will have two parents and children my age."

### Truth:

Australian families are headed by two parents, single parents, grandparents, guardians, unmarried couples and gay couples. Australian families can also be childless. AFS Australia welcomes all of these types of families as host families. You may be hosted by a retired couple with adult children no longer at home, a single mother with a very young child, or a young couple with no children. All families are screened and selected on the basis of their ability to provide a warm and welcoming home to our students – not on the basis of their family make-up.

You may not have any siblings or you may have five. Having siblings your age can be rewarding and it can be challenging if there are great cultural or personal differences. Do not presume that having siblings your age is the ideal placement. Keep an open mind.

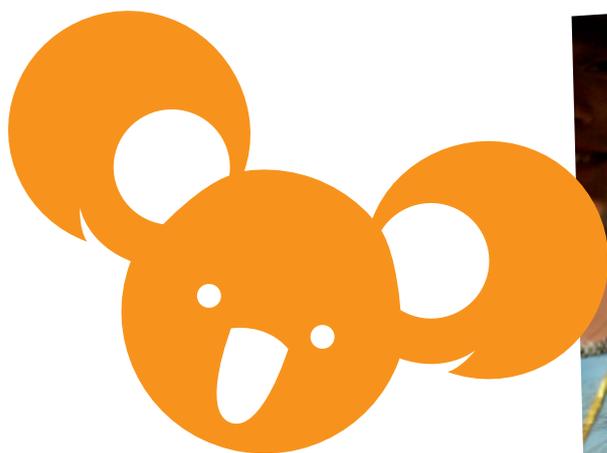
### Assumption:

"I will be away from my parents so I will have more freedom in Australia."

### Truth:

You will be away from your parents while on exchange, but you will have new ones! Your host parents will treat you as they would their own children, not as visitors or adults. You may find that you have no more freedom than you would have at home. You may also find that your host parents are stricter than your own parents. You may have to tell your host parents where you are going, with whom, and when you will be back. They may give you a curfew much earlier than the one you have back home. Try not to resent these restrictions.

*Your host family will need to get to know you and gain confidence in you. Trust is earned and you may find they will give you more freedom once you demonstrate your maturity and sensibleness. Your host family may also disapprove of your being alone in your room with teenagers of the opposite sex. They may not allow you to talk on the phone or watch television as often as you do at home. You are expected to accept their rules as you would those of your natural parents.*



## Understanding Intercultural Learning

**I**ntercultural learning refers to an individual process of acquiring the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour required to effectively interact with people from different cultures. In a broader context, it refers to how people with different backgrounds learn to live together peacefully. To achieve intercultural learning it is necessary to recognise the importance of culture.

Culture can be described as the basic assumptions, values and norms that people hold. Culture can also be divided into those elements that are very visible, and those that are harder to discover and lay beneath the surface, like our values and beliefs. In AFS we often use the iceberg concept to describe culture. (See iceberg diagram on next page). This has real importance for us as we work together to bring two cultures together. It takes time to look below the surface. In order to achieve this level of understanding we need to be aware of:

*the stereotypes that we sometimes form about cultures*  
*the differences and diversity within cultures (or subcultures)*  
*the need to be willing to accept and enjoy diversity and to learn from it*  
*the vital need for effective communication*

The first step is to understand our own culture. This is an important step for host students and host families understand your own national culture, family culture, beliefs and values. This understanding will provide insight into the differences between your native culture and that of the host country or student, and will enable you to better understand both. Remember the AFS motto "not better, not worse.... just different".

Intercultural learning does not mean that we lose the old culture to take on the new; it means that we appreciate the new, understand it and live within it, and that we walk in the other person's shoes. Intercultural learning is an emotional experience, as participants are fully immersed in a new and challenging way of life. This learning can be achieved by both the student and the host family as they learn about each other provided they:

- **Keep the lines of communication open – ask questions, seek clarity and keep talking**
- **Respect the differences: who we are is built up over a lifetime of experiences. It is not easy to change overnight or to understand another person.**
- **Be aware that people's body language, manners and reactions can be different to what you consider 'correct' or 'normal'.**
- **Just because your English is good and improving does not mean that you understand the meaning behind every word and phrase. Check to make sure your understanding is correct - even after a few months!**
- **In times of stress and illness, understanding in a new language and culture is more difficult.**
- **Remember that your role as hosted student is a challenging one.**



## Adjustment Cycle

When talking with returnees (AFS participants after they return to their home country) one comment is common – that the time on exchange was the most challenging and wonderful time of their lives. The vast majority say that they had a great time, would do it again and would recommend the experience to others. They also say there were times when they felt it was all hard work.

It is natural for students to have highs and lows throughout their exchange experience, the same way we do in everyday life. This can be heightened with the added challenge of culture shock, homesickness, language difficulties and adjustment. For each student it is different. Some say they have no homesickness; others visibly suffer for a few days or even weeks at different times of the program. All this is normal. For many it is the first time away from home for more than a day or two, for others the first time overseas. For everyone it means a new family, new culture, school and friends.

## Culture Shock

Culture shock often occurs when we are faced with a new environment very different from what we are familiar with. This can happen to travellers, people who work overseas, immigrants and exchange students. Reaction to culture shock varies from insecurity and discomfort to, in very rare situations, a total inability to cope. AFS students have the benefit of quality orientation and preparation prior to their AFS experience and after they arrive in Australia to make them aware of the potential for culture shock. The AFS support network, returnees, volunteers and the AFS staff are available to assist you. It is important to know that severe reactions are very rare. Contact your support contact or local volunteers should you have any concerns.

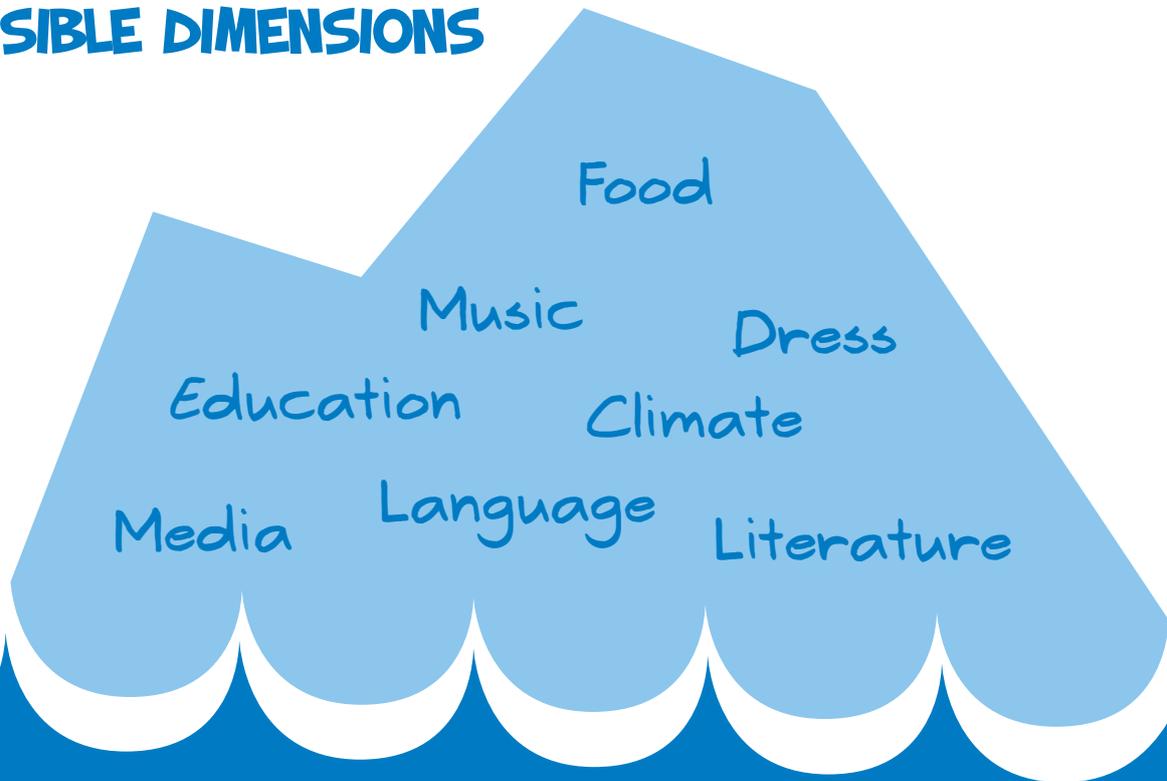
## Enjoying Your Experience

Some of the most rewarding aspects of exchange for students are the opportunities to share in the Aussie way of life with their host families and school friends, and to come to know a local Australian community intimately. Students also appreciate how much they learn about themselves in learning about others, an unexpected benefit. Try your best to enjoy your time in Australia and the experience of intercultural learning. Your exchange will not be perfect, but it will be life-altering.

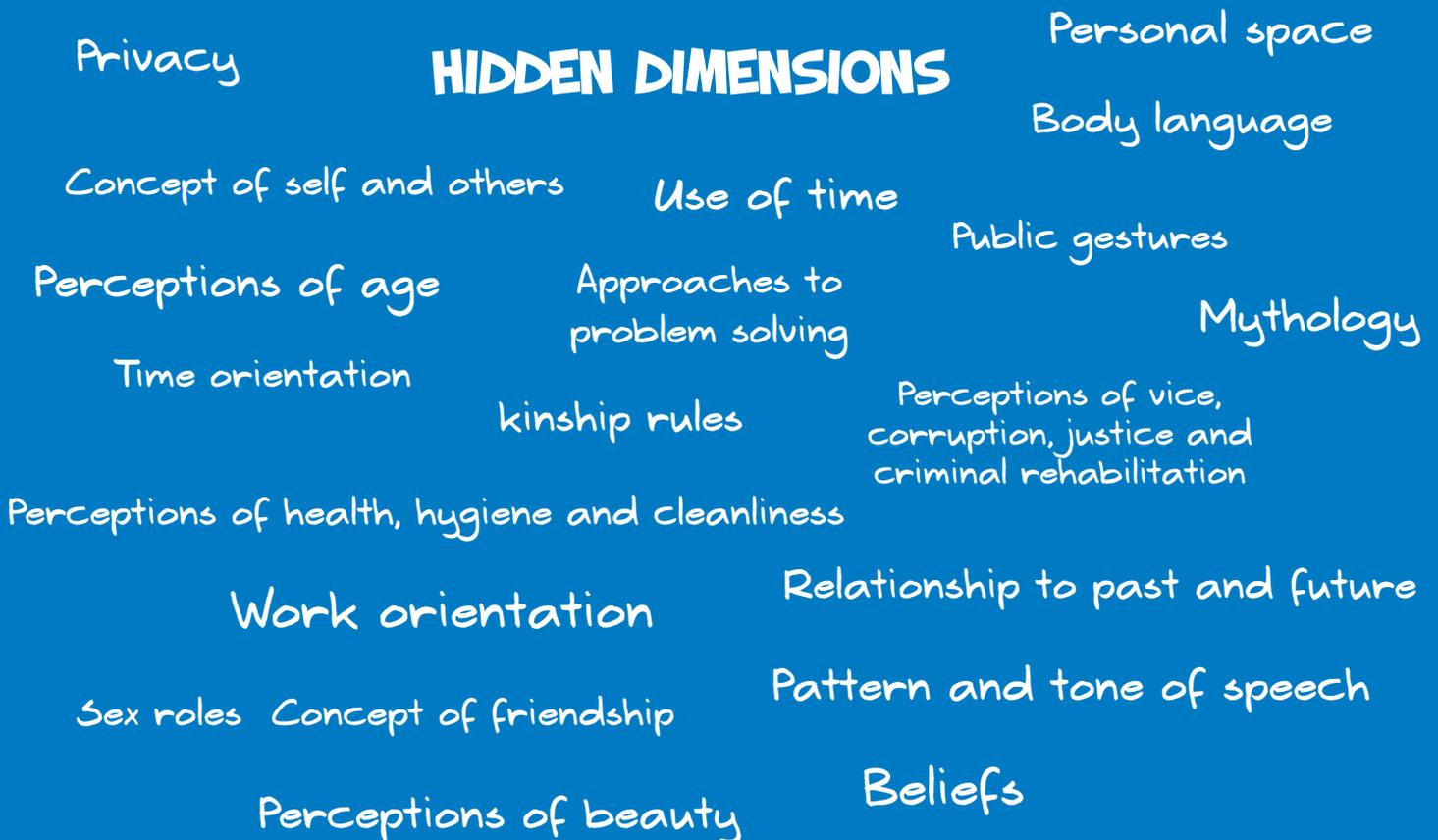


# The Iceberg Concept of Culture

## VISIBLE DIMENSIONS



## HIDDEN DIMENSIONS



## Useful Websites about Australia

Find out more about Australia in general, about specific aspects of the country and culture, and about your new host community by exploring these links.

### AFS

AFS International [www.afs.org](http://www.afs.org)  
AFS Australia [www.afs.org.au](http://www.afs.org.au)

### ABOUT AUSTRALIA

About Australia [www.about-australia.com](http://www.about-australia.com)  
Australia (Lonely Planet) [www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/pacific/aust](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/pacific/aust)  
Cultural Resources [www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au](http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au)  
Guide to Australia [www.csu.edu.au/australia/about.html](http://www.csu.edu.au/australia/about.html)  
Fabulous Facts in Geoscience [www.ga.gov.au/education/facts](http://www.ga.gov.au/education/facts)

### TOURISM SITES

Australia [www.australia.com](http://www.australia.com)  
Aboriginal Australia [www.ataust.org.au](http://www.ataust.org.au)  
New South Wales [www.visitnsw.com.au](http://www.visitnsw.com.au)  
Queensland [www.queenslandholidays.com.au](http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au)  
Victoria [www.visitvictoria.com](http://www.visitvictoria.com)  
South Australia [www.southaustralia.com](http://www.southaustralia.com)  
Tasmania [www.discovertasmania.com.au](http://www.discovertasmania.com.au)  
Western Australia [www.westernaustralia.com](http://www.westernaustralia.com)  
Northern Territory [www.travelnt.com](http://www.travelnt.com)  
Australian Capital Territory [www.canberratourism.com.au](http://www.canberratourism.com.au)

### NATIONAL MEDIA

Australia's Public Broadcaster [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)  
Australia's Multilingual and  
Multicultural Broadcaster [www.sbs.com.au](http://www.sbs.com.au)  
National Daily Newspaper [www.theaustralian.news.com.au](http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au)  
National Youth Radio [www.abc.net.au/triplej](http://www.abc.net.au/triplej)

### VISAS

Department of Immigration  
and Multicultural Affairs and  
Indigenous Affairs [www.dimia.gov.au](http://www.dimia.gov.au)



# Famous Australians

Here are just a few of the famous Australians of which you may have heard from movies, music and sport:

## Aussie Actors

### You may know...

Mel Gibson  
Nicole Kidman  
Russell Crowe  
Cate Blanchett  
Heath Ledger  
Hugh Jackman  
Geoffrey Rush  
Naomi Watts  
Toni Collette  
Brian Brown  
Hugo Weaving  
Guy Pearce

## Aussie Films

### You've probably seen already...

Moulin Rouge  
Mad Max  
Babe  
Crocodile Dundee  
  
Some movies filmed in  
Australia:  
  
Superman Returns (2005)  
The Matrix Movies  
Star Wars Episodes 1-3  
Mission Impossible 2

## Aussie Films

### You should see...

Little Fish  
Rabbit Proof Fence  
Strictly Ballroom  
Muriel's Wedding  
Shine  
Priscilla Queen of the Desert  
The Year My Voice Broke  
Flirting  
Dead Heart  
Picnic at Hanging Rock  
Gallipoli  
Breaker Morant  
The Castle

## Aussie Musicians

Kylie Minogue  
Miss Higgins  
INXS  
Natalie Imbruglia  
Powderfinger  
Savage Garden  
Human Nature  
Silverchair  
Nick Cave  
AC/DC  
Crowded House  
Bee Gees

## Aussie Athletes

Australians love and excel at sport. At the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Australians won 17 gold, 16 silver and 16 bronze medals – 49 total. Most medals won were in cycling, swimming, diving and rowing.

Some well-known Aussie athletes include:

**Swimming:** Ian Thorpe, Kieren Perkins, Dawn Fraser, Shane Gould, Murray Rose, Susie Maroney

**Golf:** Greg Norman

**Cricket:** Sir Don Bradman and Shane Warne

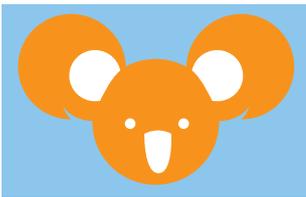
**Tennis:** Evonne Goolagong Cawley, Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Lleyton Hewitt, Samantha Stosur

**Running:** Cathy Freeman, John Landy, Ron Clarke



Your Guide to a Successful

# AFS EXCHANGE



## Before Coming to Australia

**Research!** Search the Internet, visit the library and talk to returnees to gather as much information as possible about your new host country, school, community and culture.

Send your host family a letter or email expressing your excitement about the upcoming exchange and your appreciation for their hospitality and generosity.

Phone your host family to say hello. This need only be a brief call to give you and your host family the opportunity to speak to one another directly.

Gather some photos of your natural family, friends, home and country to show your host family.

Consider bringing a small gift for your host family. Do not spend a great deal of money. Consider something small and representative of your country.

Pack lightly and in keeping with the weather and realities of your community and the duration of your stay. Australia has strict quarantine rules, which prevent food coming into the country and domestic flights from Sydney to your host community have strict weight limits for luggage. Do not over pack. Pack wisely.

## Read this Welcome to AFS Australia Booklet in its entirety!

Take it on the plane with you and review it again. Discuss its contents with other students on the plane. Consider how Australia and Australians may be different or similar from your own country and people when reading.

Make sure you have your host family's address and phone number and the AFS emergency phone number handy when travelling.

Prepare yourself for a long flight. Bring reading material, music, bottled water, and perhaps a travel pillow and other common flight accessories. Dress comfortably.

Focus on the AFS exchange itself – not on all the places you hope to see. Remember, AFS offers an educational experience, not an opportunity to be a tourist. Come to Australia planning to make the most of living as a family member and going to school. The true value of AFS is people, not places. Focus on travel undermines that value and may disappoint the many people who have worked to make your AFS experience possible.

Maintain a positive attitude about your upcoming trip. Your exchange will not be a ready-made paradise. It will be what you make it, and the first step to ensuring you have a positive exchange, is to maintain a positive attitude!

## On Arrival to your Australian International Gateway

One or more AFS volunteers will greet you at your arrival Airport and guide you to your connecting flight if you are not hosted in or near your arrival Airport. If you will be hosted in or near your arrival Airport, your host family will meet you unless otherwise notified.

Most AFS exchange students arrive on the same day, and there are a limited number of volunteers to meet all students. Do not panic if you do not see an AFS volunteer immediately upon your arrival. Stay in a visible place, wait to be seen, and look out for a volunteer in an AFS shirt. Above all, be calm, be patient and be polite. AFS volunteers have taken the time out of their day to welcome and guide you on your way to your host community.

All AFS students participate in an arrival orientation within the first few weeks of their arrival. At arrival orientation, you will get to know other students hosted in or near your community and many AFS volunteers. It is also a great opportunity to ask questions about your host school and your host community.

This orientation is not held immediately upon your arrival. The dates, venues and activities involved vary for each AFS Local Group. You will be notified by a local AFS volunteer of the date and location of your arrival orientation after you have settled into your host community.

## Meeting Your Host Family

Make a good first impression! Good first impressions go a long way in establishing a good relationship. Your host family will be as excited and as nervous as you when you first meet.

- **Remember to smile, as this will show that you are glad to be here.**
- **Aussie families often like to hug as a greeting.**
- **Expect lots of questions about yourself.**
- **Expect to be overwhelmed by having to understand and express yourself in English. Be honest about your ability to understand them and the limits of your English language skills.**
- **Expect that things will look different, sound different and even be a bit strange at first.**
- **You may feel tired after your long trip to Australia. This is normal and your family will understand, but don't begin your experience with complaints.**
- **Ask questions about what you see and don't understand.**

**Be polite!** Your host family is not being paid to host you. They are hosting you because they want to share their life with you. Be considerate, appreciative and kind. Do not criticise the country, their community or their home if it is not what you expected. Do not begin comparing your country with Australia, if you think your country is "better". You will offend your host family. With time, you will come to appreciate your new 'home away from home'.

## Things to Do in the First Days

**L**et your natural family know that you have arrived safely. Remember the expense of international telephone calls if you are using your host family's telephone. Ask them if you can telephone home on their phone, and how long you are allowed to speak with your natural family.

Spend time with your new host family. Do not withdraw into your room – even if you are jetlagged or nervous about what to say. The sooner you spend time with them, the sooner you will be comfortable with them.

Talk with your host family and decide what you will call them and what they will call you. It is best to respect their wishes with regards to what you should call them, unless you are uncomfortable with calling them 'mum' and 'dad'. Do not be offended if they mispronounce your name. They may not be accustomed to the sounds of your language or familiar with the names in your country. You may want to choose a nickname for yourself if your host family has problems pronouncing your name.

Talk with your host family about 'family rules' and your responsibilities as a member of the family. Families are different across and within cultures. You will want to get off on a good start by knowing early what you are expected to do and how you are expected to behave in the family.

Become familiar with your new home. Ask your family about any special safety or security issues (how to use appliances and lock doors, e.g.). Ask them which rooms are off-limits and which rooms you may enter and use freely.

Start to learn about your host community. Find out the rules for going out alone and exploring your local community. Ask your family questions about it. You may also find information online.

Start to learn about your host school. Research the school online, ask your siblings about it if they attend the school, and pick up a school newsletter from the school office when you go to enrol.

Consider keeping a journal to record your thoughts and impressions of your time in Australia. A journal can be therapeutic. It is a place to pour out your thoughts, feelings and hopes when you are not comfortable sharing them with others. It is a place to speak in your own language. A journal can also record your personal development from the beginning to the end of your exchange.

## Things Your Host Family Can Help You With

- **Opening a bank account**
- **Enrolling at school and getting a school uniform and books**
- **Determining how you will get to school and around the community**
- **Showing you around your local community**



## Becoming Part of the Family

There are many new things ahead of you: new house, family, food, people, places, language ...

Here is a bit of advice from two past AFS students:

"At the beginning, you will suddenly feel like a baby who doesn't know anything. You have to learn again how to behave and how to talk. Don't be afraid. Don't be angry. Ask for guidance. Ask for help. Then, you will be amazed how quickly you feel yourself "growing up" again. The time will come very soon when you feel confident in yourself and your abilities."

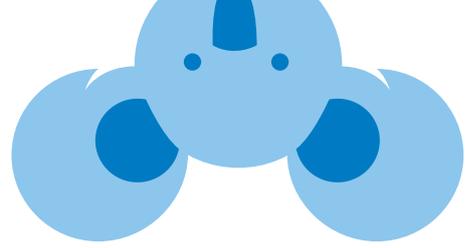
"Ask. Ask. Ask. Sometimes you feel like an idiot, not understanding, always asking questions. If you do the opposite and pretend you understand, you will make many unnecessary mistakes and miss many things."

**Come to Australia with an open mind, ready to find differences, ready to accept them and enjoy them. After all, there would be no point in being an AFS student and leaving home, if you wanted life in Australia to be the same.**

Remember that you are not alone. Your host family is making adjustments too and trying to understand your way of expressing yourself – not only in your use of their language, but in your body language as well. They will be nervous about your liking them and will not always know what to say either.

Many, many adjustments will happen so easily that you scarcely notice them. A few hours after arriving, you will know your way around the house; you will know family members' names. A week after you arrive, you will know your way to school and to classes at school. One day you will wake up and realise the adjustment period is over.

- **During your adjustment period remember the following easy tips for easier adjustment:**
- **Aussies use "Please", "Thank you" and "Sorry" often, even for little things. Do this also!**
- **Offer to help with chores (cooking, cleaning, etc.).**
- **Ask questions and listen carefully.**
- **Don't say you understand something, if it is not clear – ask that it be repeated or explained in other words.**
- **Limit the contact you have with your natural family. Constant contact will remind you of home and can lead to homesickness. It can slow down the process of adapting to your new family and country. It can also offend your host family. They will think you do not want to be here.**



## Dealing with Issues in the Home

No host family is perfect, just as your natural family is not perfect. Your host siblings may not become your best friends, just as your natural siblings may not be your best friends. At home, you probably do different things with your siblings and different things with your friends.

Your host parents will also be like your natural parents in some respects: there will be some things you like about them, and some things you do not. You will enjoy certain freedoms and be

prohibited from doing other things. They may make you angry and frustrated, and they may make you laugh and comfort you. Your host family will not be perfect. Try to remember that they have opened their home to you and offered to share their life with you. Appreciate this gift, and try to enjoy them for who they are.

### Jealousy

It is possible that someone in your host family will be jealous if you receive more attention than they do. If this happens, try to be understanding and to give the jealous person some of the time and attention he or she may have lost.

### Privacy and Quiet

You may find it challenging to share a room with a sibling if you do not have to at home. You may find it especially challenging if they are much younger than you. Remember that your host sibling is sharing too and appreciate this. Adjust to this and do not expect to enjoy absolute privacy.

Some Australian families can be loud and active. If you are used to quiet, find a place to be quiet when you need to, in or outside of the home, but be flexible as well and accept your host family's lifestyle. You should not expect their home to be just like yours. You are on exchange and living with a host family because you wanted to experience a different life and lifestyle.

### Other Issues

If things are not going well with your host family, do not despair. Talk to your support person about the problems. He or she may be able to explain things you do not understand, or suggest things you can do to improve the situation. He or she may also be able to help you speak to your host family about the problems in a way that would not offend them. You may find that the problems you are having can be solved by better communication and understanding between all of you. Living with a new family is a learning process. Ease and comfort may not come overnight or even in the first months.

Do not assume that "things will be better if I have a different family". The problems may repeat themselves in a new family, or there may be different problems. Work with the placement you were given. Work with the people who have opened their home to you. Be respectful, be courteous and be patient.

If there are serious problems, AFS is here to help, and you should contact your support person immediately. Your safety and physical and emotional well being are our primary concerns. We want you to have a safe and rewarding exchange.

## Questions To Ask Your Family

- Do we all eat together? What meals: breakfast and dinner? Just dinner?
- What is OK to eat when I want a snack? How many snacks can I have a day?
- Can I use the phone? How often? What about international calls?
- How should I answer the phone? How should I take messages?
- Can I use the computer? How often? Do you have access to the Internet? What are the rules? What are the costs? Can I download things?
- What do I do with my dirty clothes? Should I wash them myself? How? How often can I wash them? I have never had to do this before (if this is true).
- Do I iron my own clothes? How? Where is the iron and board kept? I have never had to do this before (if this is true).
- With whom do I share a bathroom? How much time can I have in the bathroom in the mornings? Before bed? Can I take more than one shower a day?
- Do I need to buy my own bathroom products like soap, shampoo and deodorant? Where should I buy them?
- How do I discard feminine hygiene products? (Used toilet tissue is flushed down the toilet in Australia, but ask your host mother or sisters about feminine hygiene products.)
- Do I have to make my own bed every morning? Can you please show me how? I have never had to do this before (if this is true).
- What house cleaning am I expected to do? Can you show me how and where the cleaning products are kept? I have never had to do this before (if this is true).
- What time am I expected home on weekdays? On Friday and Saturday? On Sunday?
- Can I invite friends over? Can I invite friends of the opposite sex?
- Can I go out alone? Can I walk alone? Take public transportation alone?
- Can I spend the night at a friend's house?



## Making Friends and Fitting In

**M**aking new friends in Australia is one of the reasons you have decided to go on exchange. It can be fun meeting new people and sometimes it can be hard work. Making friends takes time. It requires effort. It requires patience. It also requires a smiling face. Even if you miss your friends at home, who have known you all your life, and with whom everything may come easy, be prepared to reach out to people here. Reaching out to others and letting them know you want their friendship is necessary if you are going to make a happy life for yourself in Australia during your exchange.

In Australia most young people belong to a group of friends. It is acceptable to have friends that are both boys and girls. Healthy relationships are built on equality and respect. Like your friends back home, many of these friendships have been developed over many years; but this does not mean Australian young people are not happy to make new friends.

Australians may make friends through school, sport teams, clubs and religious organisations. They may also make friends in their neighbourhoods.

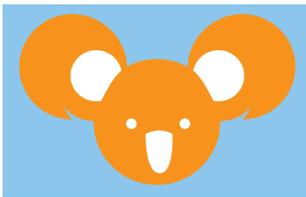
### To help you make friends you may like to:

- Remember to smile and to introduce yourself to people you meet.
- Take an interest in others.
- Observe others, especially young people at school. What do they talk about? What can you contribute to these conversations? If they are talking about music or television shows, you might like to find out more about them, so you can join in.
- Share your stories, but remember comparisons between home and Australia are not helpful, especially if you think things at home are always better. No one will like to hear how much better you think your country is than Australia.
- Ask for help in school, in finding your way around, in finding things to do, etc. Ask questions about Australia as well. This is a great way to meet people.
- Remember that friendships take time and the first person you meet may not become your best friend. It is better to talk to lots of people, and in time, a special friend may emerge.
- The amount of effort you put into making friends will increase your chances of success.
- Don't wait for friends to come to you: take the initiative.
- Consider joining a group or activity like a sport, a club, or a musical group.
- Talk with your family or AFS support contact for ideas if you are finding it difficult to make friends. They may be able to introduce you to young people with similar interests to yours or advise you on what young Australians are like.



AFS in

# AUSTRALIA



## National Office

The National Office of AFS Australia is located in Sydney. The job of AFS staff is to empower and support local volunteers across the country, to take final responsibility for AFS programs and participants, and to communicate with the other AFS offices around the world.

The people you will know best in AFS are the volunteers in your AFS Local Group and Region. You might meet or speak to members of the AFS office staff. Even if you don't, you can be sure that they know who you are and are there if needed.

## Volunteers

You will be supported by AFS Volunteers Chapter during your program. AFS Volunteers are former AFS students, their parents, families who have hosted students before, and others.

### What does AFS Volunteers do?

AFS Volunteers do the work that makes AFS programs possible. They take primary responsibility for promoting and coordinating AFS programs in their community. Your local volunteers found your host family and arranged for you to attend school. Your AFS Volunteers will be your contact with AFS Australia. They will provide support, guidance and encouragement for you during your time on exchange. They are volunteers, and are not paid for their work. They are involved because they enjoy it and believe in the AFS mission.

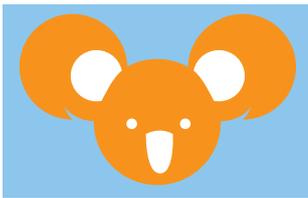
### Are there Local activities?

Yes! At various times during your program there will be special meetings where you will meet the volunteers, other hosted students, families and returnees, and some social events like picnics, barbecues and get-togethers. Be ready to join in all of the activities offered as there is always the opportunity for fun and meeting other young people.



AFS

# RULES & POLICIES



AFS has established policies to ensure your welfare. While in Australia, AFS has the responsibility and duty of care for your safety and wellbeing. This includes the legal responsibility for students.

AFS students hosted in Australia are subject to Australian law and are responsible for following the law. AFS is not able to protect a student from legal proceedings. Should your actions lead to legal action, AFS will provide guidance.

## Driving:

AFS students are forbidden to drive a car or other motorised vehicle on public roads, or fly an aircraft. Breaking this rule is cause for early return to your home country.

## Drugs:

All students are forbidden to use drugs not prescribed for medical purposes and other illegal substances. In Australia, use or possession of drugs is punishable by law. Breaking this rule is cause for early return to your home country. AFS students must be very careful not to associate or socialise with drug users. This is a concern that AFS takes very seriously.

## Drinking:

All students under 18 are prohibited by Australian law from purchasing alcohol or drinking alcohol in a public place. Breaking this rule is cause for early return to your home country. AFS discourages the consumption of alcohol by all students, whether in public or private. Excessive consumption of alcohol is also cause for early return to the home country.

## Smoking:

All students under 18 are prohibited by Australian law from purchasing cigarettes or smoking cigarettes. Breaking this rule is cause for early return to your home country.

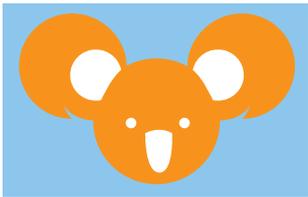
## Hitchhiking:

AFS students in Australia are forbidden to hitchhike. This is dangerous and AFS cannot take responsibility for students who chose to hitchhike. Breaking this rule is cause for early return to your home country.



## A Brief Guide to

# TRAVEL POLICY



Slang

All AFS students must comply with the following travel policy:

### Travel with Host Parents (or others approved by host parents)

Host parents are responsible for a student's travel while in their care.

Students must obtain permission from their host families prior to making any travel arrangements and they must provide their host families with their itinerary and contact details. Travel must not impact on school. If this cannot be avoided then the school must give its permission. See below for instruction's on how to apply to AFS for permission to take independent travel.

Host families may travel with their students; may allow their students to travel with or stay overnight with a family known and approved by them; and may allow their students to travel with an organised group with responsible leaders (e.g. school, church, youth group or AFS sanctioned activity). If the student and the family are away overnight, or longer, a contact number must be left with the AFS Volunteers in case there is an emergency in the student's natural family or country and urgent contact is necessary.

### Travel with Natural Parents (or others from your native country)

This travel is seen as a disruption to your program, to your adjustment and to school attendance. AFS discourages visits from relatives and friends from home. If such visits occur at the end of the program, the student may be "program released". Host families have no obligation to offer their homes to any member of the host student's natural family. You must inform AFS of any intended visits by natural family, relatives or friends from your home country. AFS will only give permission for the visit if your host family, school and AFS volunteers agree that it will not cause disruption to your program and adjustment.

## Independent Travel

Independent travel occurs when a student travels and stays overnight without either their host family, another person approved by the host parent(s), AFS volunteers or an organised group with responsible leaders (e.g. school, church, youth group or AFS sanctioned activity) known to the host parents.

## Getting Permission for Independent Travel

- **Your host parents must give permission in advance.**
- **The host school must give permission if it is during school time.**
- **The local AFS Volunteers must give permission.**
- **You must submit your application to the Support Coordinator in the National Office at least 1 month before travel.**
- **The National Office will contact AFS in your home country who – if they and your natural parent's agree – will obtain a 'waiver' from your natural parent's.**
- **Travel must not be booked until all steps have been completed and a waiver is granted. The earlier you get your application in, the earlier you will be able to book your travel.**
- **While travelling you are still on the AFS program and must abide by AFS rules.**
- **The local AFS Volunteers must know your itinerary and contact details.**

## Can I Travel? - Examples

### *I want to attend a week-long scout jamboree.*

If your host parents are happy with the arrangements and have given permission, you may attend. Please advise your support person. If during school term, written permission from the principal is needed.

### *I want to go to New Zealand to visit a friend? What's the story?*

AFS Australia does not allow independent international travel because of visa regulations, health insurance and the disruption to your AFS program.

### *I want to travel to another family in Melbourne. On the way I will be staying in a backpacker's hostel.*

AFS Australia does not allow students to stay independently in backpacker hostels or hotels.

### *I want my AFS friends from another area to stay for a week during the next school holidays.*

It may be possible to arrange this with your host family and AFS volunteers but, You cannot expect that your host family will also offer their home to your friends.



# Application for an Independent Travel Waiver

- All travel arrangements must first be discussed with your host parents.
- This form must be filled in and given to your AFS local group.
- If the local group have given you permission the form must be faxed or emailed to the Support Coordinator at AFS Head Office **ONE MONTH BEFORE** you plan to travel and make any travel bookings.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Family Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Who are you travelling with? \_\_\_\_\_

Where are you going? \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of the travel? \_\_\_\_\_

How are you travelling there? \_\_\_\_\_

What dates will you be away? \_\_\_\_\_

## Tick if completed:

I have discussed my travel plans with my host family.

My host family or an AFS volunteers has sighted my invitation from the family I will be staying with.

If the travel is during school time, I have got permission from my principal.

Name of the person/people you are staying with: \_\_\_\_\_

Are they associated with AFS?: \_\_\_\_\_

Their relationship to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Host Parent

Signature of AFS Volunteer

Fax or Email to The Support Coordinator

F: 02 9215 0088 E: amelia.drane@afs.org

**You will receive an email informing you that your independent travel waiver has been approved.**

**When you receive this email, you are now able to book your travel.**

**You can not travel until your travel has been approved**

# Application for a High Risk Activity Waiver

- This form needs to be completed if you intent to participant in a high risk activity.
- This form must be faxed or emailed to The Support Coordinator at AFS Head Office
- **ONE MONTH BEFORE** you plan to do the high-risk activity.

## What is a High Risk Activity?

Any activity where there is a high risk of bodily injury and the exclusions on the supplemental insurance consider the activity to involve exceptional risk or injury. These include:

- **Motorized Activities (not requiring a license) such as:**  
Quad bike/Trail Bike, Scenic flights in Helicopters/Small Airplanes
- **Outdoor Activities such as:**  
Bush Walking, Horseback Riding, Rock Climbing, Bungee Jumping, Hang Gliding, Zorbing
- **Team and/or School Sports such as:**  
Australian Rules Football, Baseball/Softball, Hockey, Rugby, Soccer, Martial Arts
- **Water Sports such as:**  
Canoeing/Kayaking, Scuba Diving/Snorkelling, Surfing, Swimming (pool, lake, river, ocean),  
Water Skiing, White Water Rafting
- **Winter Sports such as:** Ice Skating, Snow Skiing/Boarding

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Family Email: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the activity? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the activity? \_\_\_\_\_

Fax or Email to the The Support Coordinator

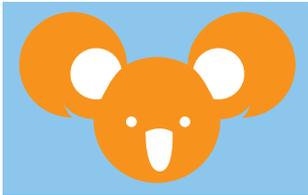
F: 02 9215 0088 E: amelia.drane@afs.org

**You will receive an email informing you that your high risk activity waiver has been approved.**

**When you receive this email, you are now able to participate in this activity.**

**You can not participant in the high risk activity until your waiver has been approved**

# PROCEDURE



FOR STUDENTS WITH  
MEDIBANK PRIVATE OSHC COVER

### IF YOU HAVE PAID THE MEDICAL / HOSPITAL BILL

- Ask your doctor to complete and sign a "Medical Report Form"  
(included in host family pack and also available at [www.afs.org.au/host/resources](http://www.afs.org.au/host/resources))
- Obtain reimbursement from Medibank Private  
(To find out how to claim the medical expenses with Medibank Private other than in person, please go to <http://www.medibank.com.au> and then click on "make a claim online" link)
- If the Medibank private will not pay the full bill and / or there are bills for prescriptions, physiotherapy etc; send the bills, Medibank Private reimbursement receipt and "Medibank Report Form" to the AFS National Office. The address is at the back of the booklet.
- AFS will reimburse the "gap payment" and any other costs to the nominated account of the participant or the host family. (Please use the expense claim form available at [www.afs.org.au/host/resources](http://www.afs.org.au/host/resources))

### IF THE MEDICAL / HOSPITAL BILL IS UNPAID

- Ask your doctor to complete and sign a "Medical Report Form" and obtain the bill from your doctor or medical institution / hospital.
- Obtain a cheque from Medibank Private payable to a doctor or medical institution for the billing amount and also obtain a cheque or payment for any other expense you have incurred eg prescription for medication which are covered by Medibank Private to be payable to you.
- Send the bill from the medical institution, the Medibank Private cheque for the doctor or medical institution and "Medical Report Form" to AFS National Office. (postal address is at the back of this brochure)
- AFS will issue the "gap payment" cheque and will post both cheques to the doctor or medical institution
- If Medibank Private did not cover fully the bill for prescription for medication send the receipt of the prescription and Medibank Private reimbursement receipt and AFS will reimburse the "gap payment" to you. (please use the expense claim form [www.afs.org.au/host/resources](http://www.afs.org.au/host/resources))

Please, always keep the originals of the receipts and post the copies only

If you are participating in an Intensive Learning Language Program or Homestay Plus Program and are on a visitor's visa and do not have OSHC, AFS will pay directly or will reimburse the cost, with the exceptions stated under the AFS International medical policy.

# Medical Report

## To the physician

The patient is an exchange student with AFS Intercultural Programs, Australia. AFS is ultimately responsible for his or her welfare in Australia. AFS is the link, through our office overseas, with his or her parents and will pay costs not covered by Overseas Student Health Cover (see exceptions below).

To enable AFS to carry out its responsibilities and to fulfill audit requirements for documentation of any bill paid, please complete the relevant sections below. If immediate communication and or authorisation is needed, telephone AFS 1800 023 982, including after hours.

## Medical costs which AFS will not pay

Medical costs which must be paid by the student and natural family are: any related to pre-existing conditions, routine dental or eye examinations or care, eye glasses, contact lenses, preventive medication or immunization, cosmetic or elective surgery.

**Name of patient:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Symptoms or injuries:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Diagnosis:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Laboratory studies or x-rays or results: (attach a copy of any relevant report.)**

**Medical treatment:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

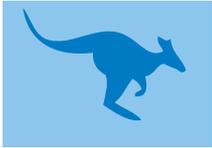
**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

This form must accompany any request to AFS for payment or reimbursement of medical expenses.  
Send it, with documentation to this address.

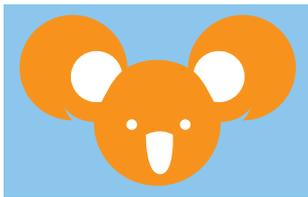


**AFS Intercultural Programs, Australia**  
PO Box 5, Strawberry Hills  
2012, NSW



AFS

# SAFETY TIPS



Australia is a relatively safe country however we do have particular ways of ensuring personal safety. The following pages will help you to understand the way that Australians approach certain situations and avoid dangerous ones. We cannot anticipate all situations and questions so we provide each student a support person who they can approach with any questions they need answered.

Australians are very open people and are willing to answer questions about personal issues. We encourage you to communicate openly with your host family so that you can approach them and talk with them about personal matters. Your support person is also available to talk to you, as are AFS volunteers and AFS staff members. Open communication and following the rules and advice of AFS staff, volunteers and your host family will be your best safeguards.

## Personal Safety Issues

### Safety In and Around the Home

Here is an outline of the general way of life of Australian families. However, remember that Australia is a very large and diverse country – this means that rules and safety concerns will be different depending on your region and family. Read this outline and then discuss safety with your host family as they will know their area best.

In Australia people usually lock their doors and windows when they leave their home. In smaller towns, where security is not such an issue families may not lock their homes at all. Families in the city will probably lock their front and back door even while they are inside. You may be trusted with a key to the home and expected to lock up the house according to instructions given by your host family.



## Some questions that you should ask your host family:

- **Do you lock the doors and the windows? When should they be locked? How do they lock?**
- **Will I have my own house key?**
- **What should I do if I am home alone and a stranger knocks on the door?**
- **In case of an emergency who do I contact? Where are the emergency contact numbers?**
- **Do you have first aid equipment and a fire extinguisher? Where are they?**
- **How should I answer the phone? What information can I tell strangers?**
- **Are there any appliances that I should not use or that often cause problems?**

## Safety Outside of the Home

Your host family will know their community and will orientate you to the community and surrounding area. They will give you advice on places to go, places to avoid and how to get around. You should take their advice seriously and ask them any questions that might help you feel more secure in the community.

Australia is a reasonably safe country so you will probably be allowed out to visit friends, go to the shops or attend sporting activities on your own. Your family will probably expect to know:

- **Where you are going. The address and a phone number.**
- **What time you expect to be back. If you are going to be late and who you are going with.**

Public telephones are common in Australia and you can make a local phone call for 50 cents or with a phone card. Some public phones no longer accept coins, so we recommend that you purchase a phone card from a newsagent and carry it with you at all times. Always carry with you your home phone number and the AFS emergency phone number. It is very common for all families in Australia to have mobile phones, therefore you may want to purchase a sim card with the same mobile company as your host family to make it cheaper to contact them. It is advised you always have some credit on your mobile phone in case you may need to make an urgent or emergency call.

Public transport in Australia is reasonable safe to use. However, at night, you will need to be more cautious and should sit close to the blue safety light on a train or close to the driver on a bus. It is advisable to have someone meet you when you get off the train/ bus at night.

Pick-pockets, robberies, bag snatches and muggings are not a serious problem in Australia; however, it is advised to be cautious with your personal belongings both on the street and while at school. Always keep your wallet in a safe place and do not carry large amounts of money with you. You will have the opportunity to open a bank account in Australia and can access your money at cash machines (ATMs). It is also advised, when out at night alone, to stay in well lit areas.

## Some questions you should ask you host family:

- **Are there unsafe areas in this community where I should not go?**
- **Are there certain places where I should not go at night?**
- **What are the rules for when I go out at night? What time should I be home?**
- **Does the public transport operate at night and is it safe?**
- **What should I do if I am approached by a stranger?**

## Safety at School

Schools in Australia are generally very safe. You may be allocated a locker where you can keep your school books, bag and personal belongings; however it is still recommended that you do not leave valuables or large amounts of money in your locker. There will always be someone at school that you will be able to talk to about any problems. This could be your year coordinator, school counsellor or a teacher with whom you feel comfortable.

## Uncomfortable Social Situations

### Laws, Illegal Drugs and Alcohol

In Australia the legal age for purchasing and drinking alcohol is 18 years old. Underage drinking and buying alcohol for a minor is punishable by law. Hotels, bars and clubs are very strict in Australia and will ask for current photo ID before they allow you into the establishment. Alcohol will not be served at AFS functions to students.

Your host family might offer you an alcoholic beverage, which is acceptable under their supervision. It is quite common for host parents to enjoy a glass of wine or beer with their evening meal. If they do offer you an alcoholic beverage, you never have to feel compelled to drink – even if someone insists you do or pretends to be offended if you don't. If this happens, we recommend that you talk to your support person. AFS expects you to have a responsible attitude towards alcohol. Abuse of alcoholic beverages could be cause for early return.

If you're invited to a party or a special event and are not sure if it is safe to go, find out a little about the party or event e.g.: where is it being held and who will be there. Your host siblings, parents, friends or teachers at school should be able to give you information about the event and the people expected to attend. Your host parents may also forbid you to attend certain kinds of parties or events. You should respect your host parents' advice, even if others you know are going.

If you find yourself in a place where you're not comfortable because drugs are being used, or because you are not at ease with the people, you should never be ashamed to leave. If you don't want to hurt people's feelings, you might say you have to go because you're tired or not feeling well.

When going out, you should always think about the way you are coming back. You should check the public transportation timetable – many trains and buses do not run at night. If you intend to come back by car with a friend, make sure he/she has not been drinking alcohol. We strongly advise you not to accept a ride from someone you don't know well. Hitch-hiking is strictly forbidden.

### Sexual Harassment

Cultures differ in their views of appropriate sexual behaviour and practice for young people. Australians are fairly open to talk about the subject of sexual education. You may wish to discuss and clarify acceptable behaviour – the advice of people you have come to know and trust is very valuable.

In societies where some young people are sexually active, there are also many who are not. You should not compromise your own personal values and beliefs regarding sexual behaviour. If you have sexual intercourse, you must protect yourself against pregnancy, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. You can buy condoms in any pharmacy or supermarket in Australia. Under Australian law, it is illegal to have sexual intercourse with a person under 16 years of age.

Sexual harassment occurs in most countries. Australia is no different. In some situations it may be unclear to you if you are being sexually harassed or if a particular person's behaviour is inappropriate. Trust your own instinct; if you feel uncomfortable, leave the situation. Your host siblings, parents and friends may also be able to advise you

about the normal behaviour of people you do not know. You can also ask teachers at school, the AFS volunteers in your community or AFS staff.

It is important to remember that you are in a different country and your clothes, gestures and attitudes might seem inappropriate in Australia. Exchange students should be careful about the message they are sending by dressing provocatively or by using provocative body language. Australians usually shake hands when they meet one another. Friends may hug or kiss once on the cheek. You will learn best by observation - watch your friends and host siblings and try to follow their example.

## Acceptable Language and Behaviour

Swearing and using abusive language and behaviour, is considered to be offensive in Australia. Sniffing and spitting is not acceptable behaviour.

In formal situations, such as at school, visible tattoos and body piercings are not acceptable.

## Natural Disasters

### Bushfires

Australian summers can be incredibly hot. Combined with the serious drought that we currently face, bushfires can be a big problem. If you live in an area where bushfires occur, you will generally have a lot of warning of fire approaching, and your Host Family will guide you to pack your essential belongings and leave the home to go to a safe place. The Fire Services in Australia evacuate people from their homes, if needed, with as much warning as possible and provide information and advice about bushfires to the community.

A Fire Ban may be in place in your area of Australia. This means that you must use gas or electricity for cooking (no wood-fuelled barbeques), and smokers must be very careful when disposing of cigarette butts.

## Dangerous Animals

### Snakes and Spiders

Some Snakes and Spiders in Australia are extremely venomous and can be deadly. These snakes and spiders are generally found in areas where there is a lot of bushland or in rural areas. If you see a venomous or unfamiliar snake or spider, do not attempt to handle it. Tell your Host Parents or another adult immediately. Hospitals in Australia carry anti-venom for venomous snakes and spiders. Your Host Family will be able to advise you on whether there are any venomous snakes and spiders found in your community. There are websites for each State in Australia that provides pictures of snakes and spiders for identification and first aid advice.



## Emergencies

Always keep the phone number of your host family on you. In case of emergency, you should try and contact your host family, an AFS local contact person or National Office.

### National Office

Phone: (02) 9215 0077

Emergency phone: 0414 594 694

Outside of business hours, AFS staff are available on the 24-hour emergency mobile phone.

### National Emergency Number

Phone: 000

(Fire, Ambulance and Police)

## Final Words on Safety

The best advice that AFS Australia can give you in regards to personal safety is to:

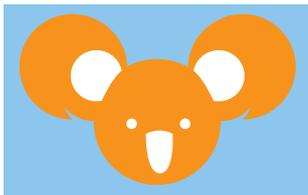
- **Get to know Australian culture, attitudes and behaviours well through questions, observations and conversations with your host family, friends and local AFS contacts.**
- **Take seriously any concerns that your host family and school have expressed, follow their advice and accept their rules.**
- **Do not ignore your own instinct. If you feel uncomfortable or vulnerable, take action to overcome or avoid a situation.**
- **Do not compromise your own personal behaviour, values and beliefs.**
- **Try to be cautious and sensible, keep an open mind, and enjoy your stay in Australia.**





## A Brief Guide to

# AUSTRALIAN



Slang

"Australians use a number of slang terms. They can be very confusing to people who are not familiar with the language (Australian English). To help you I have written some of the most commonly used ones. Some of these expressions will be used by older people and may be unfamiliar to younger Australians. Australians also use a lot of contractions. These usually take the form of an "ie" ending, as in "pressie" (present), "barbie" (barbecue), "bikkie" (biscuit), or an "o" ending as in "milko" (milkman).

Enjoy!

## A

Ace  
Ariel Ping-pong

codes)  
Aerogard ®  
Akubra ®  
Ankle biters  
Arvo  
Aussie

Great, good  
Australian Rules Football  
(slightly derogatory term used by supporters of other football

Personal insect repellent  
Australian hat  
Young children  
Afternoon  
An Australian

## B

B.Y.O.

Back o' Bourke  
Barbie  
Battler

Bring your own - usually referring to beer or food for a party or alcohol for a restaurant  
In the outback - a long way off  
Barbecue (**BBQ**)  
A person who continues to fight against the odds

Beaut ! Beauty !  
Bending the elbow  
Berserk  
Big bikkies  
Bit of a worry  
Black stump  
Bloke  
Bloody

Bung on

## C

Cactused  
Charged like a wounded bull  
Chateau cardboard  
Choof off  
Chook  
Like a **chook** with its head cut off  
Chuck  
Chunder  
Clapped out  
Coathanger  
Cop Shop  
Cost an arm and a leg  
Crash ... **to crash**  
Croaked  
Crook  
to go crook  
Crust ... What do you do for a **crust?**

## D

Dead set  
Do your block  
Dob ... to **dob** someone in  
Dole bludger  
Dough  
Drive a man to drink  
Drongo  
Drop kick  
Drowned our sorrows

## E

Esky  
Every man and his dog

Great ! Tremendous !  
To have a drink (alcoholic)  
Excited, crazy  
(Big biscuits) A lot of money  
Cause for concern  
Imaginary place in the far outback  
Man, guy  
The "great Australian Adjective"  
1) Often doesn't have an actual meaning, e.g. "I don't bloody know"  
2) Very (e.g. bloody good = very good) Brass monkey Very cold (weather)  
"It's brass monkey weather."  
To fake, to pretend

Broken down - unserviceable  
Overpriced, costly  
Wine in a cask (also "bag in box")  
Go away  
Chicken  
Agitated, excited  
Throw  
Throw up, vomit  
Worn out, useless  
Sydney Harbour Bridge  
Police station  
Very expensive  
To fall asleep wherever you may be  
Died  
Sick  
To be angry  
What kind of work do you do?



Determined, definite  
To get very angry  
To tell on someone  
Person with no desire to work who accepts unemployment benefits  
Money  
Under extreme pressure  
Dopey person, fool  
Idiot  
Drank a lot to forget problems

An insulated box to keep food or drink cold  
A large crowd, everybody

## F

Fair go  
Fit as a Mallee bull  
Flies...there are no **flies** on me  
Front up  
Fruit ... bag of fruit

Fair treatment  
Very fit, strong  
I'm not stupid  
To arrive, attend  
Man's suit

## G

G'day  
Galah  
Gander ... take a gander  
Garbo  
Give it a miss  
Go whistle  
Goofy foot

Hello, how are you?  
Idiot, mad (also native bird)  
Look, have a look.  
Refuse, trash collector  
Do not attend, don't go  
Do without  
Left footed surfer

## H

Hard time ... give someone a hard time  
Hard Yakka  
Home and hosed

Criticise, verbally abuse  
Hard work  
To finish something with ease

## I

Iron lung ... he wouldn't work in an **iron lung**

He is very lazy

## J

Jack ... I'm **jack** of this

Fed up, tired

## K

Kangaroos in the top paddock  
Kick the bucket  
Kiwi  
Knickers ... don't get your **knickers** in a knot  
Knock back

Stupid Insane, mad  
Die  
New Zealander  
Don't get excited or anxious  
A rejection

## L

Last shower ... I didn't come down in the **last shower**    I'm not stupid ... I don't believe the story you're telling me

## M

Make a bundle  
Mate  
Mick  
Milko  
Moniker  
Put your **moniker** on this  
Motza  
Mozzie

Make a lot of money  
Friend  
Roman Catholic, Irish (**derogatory**)  
The milkman  
Your name  
Please sign your name  
A lot of money  
Mosquito

## N

Ned Kelly  
as game as **Ned Kelly**

Notorious bushranger (A folk hero)  
Courageous and spirited



Nipper  
No worries  
Nong

Small child or a member of the junior surf lifesavers  
1) It will be okay, it's not a problem 2) You're welcome.  
Idiot, someone who does something stupid

## O

Ocker  
Offsider  
Old lady  
Old cheese  
On for young and old  
Open slather  
Owja go?  
Owyagoin (mate)?

A "raw" Australian  
Partner or assistant  
Wife  
Mother  
A fight involving more than just two people  
No restrictions  
How did you go? How did you get on?  
How are you?

## P

Packing it, packing death  
Paper bag ... he couldn't fight his way out of a **paper bag**  
Pissed  
Pissed Off  
Piss Off!  
Pom, Pommy  
Port  
Postie  
Preggo, preppers  
Pressie  
Pub crawl

Very scared , frightened  
  
Totally harmless, no threat  
Drunk  
Angry (or gone away in a hurry)  
Go away!  
English person  
Carrying bag, suitcase  
The postman  
Pregnant  
Present, gift  
Going from hotel to hotel

## R

Rack off  
Rafferty's rules  
Rage  
Rain check  
Rapt  
Reggo  
Ripper, rippa  
Ropeable  
Rubbish  
Rug rat  
Run it by me

Go away, leave  
No rules at all  
To party on  
To postpone or put off  
Very pleased or happy  
Motor vehicle registration  
Terrific, great  
Very angry  
To insult someone in a friendly manner  
Small child  
Tell me, explain it to me



## S

Safe as houses  
Sangers  
Satdee  
Score  
Screw loose ... to have a **screw loose**  
Septics, Sepos  
Shonky  
Shoot through  
Shout

Very safe  
Sandwiches  
Saturday  
To succeed in getting someone to bed  
To be slightly crazy  
Americans (septic tanks...yanks – derogatory)  
Suspect, not "true blue"  
To leave quickly  
To treat someone to something (usually a drink or round of drinks)

Sickie  
Skint  
Skippy  
Skip(py)  
Smoko  
Snags  
Soap ... didn't know him from a bar of **soap**  
Spew  
Spewing  
Spit the dummy  
Squiz ... take a **squiz**  
Strife  
Stroppy  
Sucked in  
Sweep

A day off work (not always because you are sick)  
No money, broke  
Kangaroo, (after a kangaroo on TV)  
Australian person  
A break for a cigarette or coffee  
Sausages  
Stranger  
Throw up, vomit  
Unhappy, annoyed  
To throw a tantrum  
Look  
Big trouble  
Annoyed, upset or angry  
Taken in, gullible  
For a horse race (especially the Melbourne Cup) Everyone puts in a sum of money and draws the name of a horse. The money is divided into prizes for the winners.

## T

Talent  
Talk the leg off an iron pot  
That's the shot  
Throw in the towel  
Till the cows come home  
Toey  
Troppo  
Truckie  
True blue  
Turfed out  
Twist ... gone around the twist  
Two pot screamer

Good looking woman/man  
To talk non stop  
Well done, approval  
Give up  
Very late, for a long time  
Nervous or anxious  
Throw a fit, go mad (derived from "to go tropical")  
Truck driver  
Really Australian, honest  
Thrown out  
Distressed, annoyed, crazy  
One who can't hold his alcohol

## U

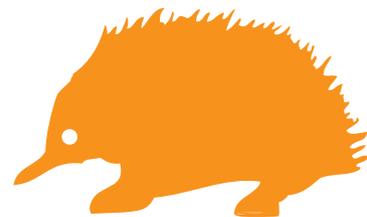
Uee ... to chuck a uee  
Uni

To make a "U" turn  
University, college

## V

Veggies

Vegetables



## W

What d'ya reckon?  
Wobbly... chucked a wobbly  
Wowser

What do you think? Also rhetorical question with an obvious answer  
Threw a tantrum  
Prudish, not social, teetotaler

## Y

Yair  
You're not Robinson Crusoe  
You've got Buckley's

Yes  
You are not alone  
You have no chance at all

## Your Address Book



### **AFS National Office**

Level 4, 418A Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010

PO Box 5, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Phone: (02) 9215 0077

Fax: (02) 9215 0088

Website : [www.afs.org.au](http://www.afs.org.au)

**Your AFS Local Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Support Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Local Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Host Family:** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

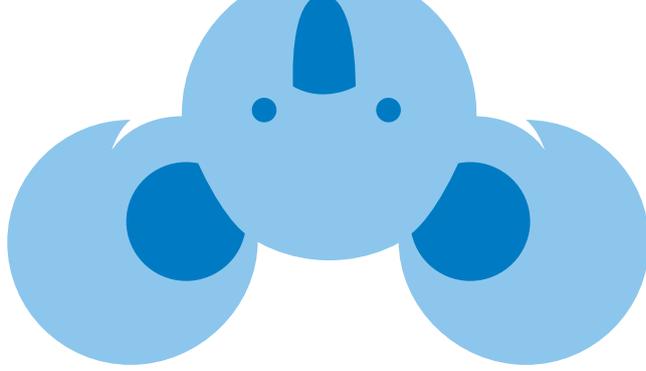
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

**Friend:** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

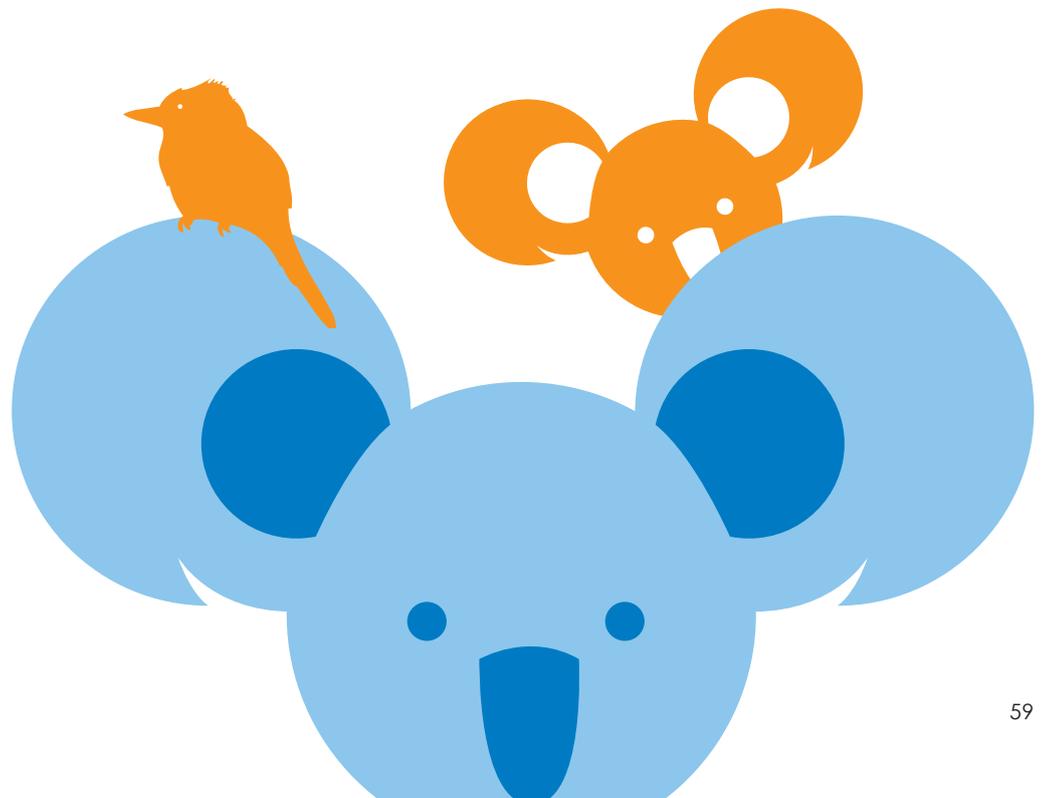
**Friend:** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



"We at AFS Australia take the quality of our programs very seriously.

If you have any problems with the experience you receive from AFS please visit the complaints section of the AFS Australia website at <http://www.afs.org.au/about-afs/complaints-policy/> alternatively please call 1300 131 736 to obtain a hard copy of the AFS Australia Complaints Policy, and we will work with you to arrange a suitable solution."





Level 4, 418A Elizabeth St, Surry Hills NSW, 2012  
PO BOX 5, Strawberry Hills NSW, 2012

**Website:** [www.afs.org](http://www.afs.org)  
**Enquiries Line:** 1300 131 736  
**Telephone:** 02 9215 0077  
**Fax:** 02 9215 0088

CFN 13488 | ABN 54 008 507 864

