



**AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION
ACADEMY PTY LTD**

CRICOS Provider No: 02633F



**INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT
INFORMATION
MANUAL**

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Support for International Students.....	3
Accommodation.....	3
Renting an Apartment, Flat or House.....	4
Sharing an Apartment, Flat or House.....	4
Hostel Accommodation.....	4
Other Accommodation Issues.....	5
Part-time Work.....	5
Employment Rights.....	5
Money & Banks.....	7
Credit cards.....	8
Currency.....	8
Applying for a Tax File Number.....	9

LIVING IN MELBOURNE

Australia.....	10
Victoria.....	10
Melbourne.....	10
Climate.....	11
Festivals.....	12
International Sporting Events.....	12
Art.....	12
Multiculturalism.....	12
Language.....	13
Religion.....	13
Clean, Safe, Cosmopolitan.....	13
Health Care.....	14
Food.....	14
Electricity.....	14
Transport.....	15
Telephones.....	15
Sports & Recreation.....	15
Travel.....	16
Budgeting.....	16
Tipping.....	16
A Good Choice for Study.....	16
Australia Welcomes Overseas Students.....	17
Study Methods.....	17
Cost of Living.....	18

Introduction

Welcome to Australian Education Academy Pty Ltd. The purpose of this handbook is to introduce you to the services available to you here at the academy, and provide you with some general information about life in Melbourne. If you have any particular questions or requests, the teachers and staff at the Academy are available to assist in whatever way they can.

Support for International Students

Australian Education Academy Pty Ltd has a Student Contact Officer available if you have personal problems or problems with school or anything else that may be causing you concern. Contact details for all AEA staff will be given to students at induction on the day of commencement.

AEA cares about our students and seeks to ensure your stay with us is not only academically rewarding, but also that it is an enjoyable one.

Accommodation

The first decision to consider is deciding what type of place you want to live in and where you want to live. You can rent your own apartment, flat or house or you can share a flat or house with other people (an arrangement called “share accommodation”). When you make a decision about where to live, you need to balance the cost of higher rents in the city areas with the lower rents and higher transport costs of living in the suburbs.

There are some vacancies that you can check on the Age newspaper website: www.theage.com.au. Please click on “property”, then click on either “renting” or “sharing” for more information.

Rental properties can also be accessed via www.realestate.com.au – this site offers a range of accommodation with various real estate agents throughout Melbourne. Another useful site for renting a place of your own is to visit the Victoria Real Estate Agent website on <http://www.review.com.au>. This site lists real estate agents by suburb in alphabetical order.

Renting an Apartment, Flat or House

Renting your own apartment, flat or house means you can choose who lives with you and may be a good choice for students who prefer their independence. It also means that you may need to buy (or rent) all your own furniture. The estate agent will ask you to sign a contract (tenancy agreement or lease) with the owner, agreeing that you will stay in the place for a minimum period of time (usually 6 or 12 months).

Make certain that the accommodation is suitable for your needs and that you can afford it. Contact real estate agents close to the area in which you want to live.

The average apartment or flat ranges from \$150 - \$250 per week (one bedroom) or \$200 - \$400 per week for a larger flat or house (two/three bedrooms). You will also pay a bond or security deposit equal to one month's rent. A bond is money you pay to the landlord or real estate agent in case you don't fulfill your responsibilities.

It is refundable after you move out of the flat or house, provided you leave the property in reasonable condition and fulfill your obligations under the lease.

Sharing an Apartment, Flat or House

This type of rental accommodation can only be arranged after you arrive in Melbourne. In a shared apartment, flat or house each person usually has his or her own bedroom and shares the bathroom, kitchen and living areas with other people.

Costs depend on the size of the residence and the number of people sharing. Your budget should allow for food, electricity and other bills, plus transport and other personal costs. Food costs can be shared, with everyone paying an agreed amount per week, or each person buying his or her own food (approximately \$75 to \$100 per week).

In most households the cost of electricity, telephone rental and other bills are shared equally (approximately \$50 per week).

You will normally record and pay for your own telephone calls. Long distance and international calls are itemized on the telephone bill, so they are listed individually with the number called and the cost of the call.

The average price of a room ranges from \$100 to \$150 per week. You will also be asked to pay a bond or security deposit.

Hostel Accommodation

Hostels usually have bathroom, living and leisure areas that are shared with other residents. Some hostels include meals in their fees, while at others you cook for yourself. You can have your own room at most hostels but this is more expensive than if you are sharing a room with another student. Prices vary from \$90 to \$250 per week. There may be other charges, such as a bond (security deposit) and appliance charges.

Other Accommodation Issues

If you choose to rent or live in share accommodation or organise a share accommodation house you should be aware of your legal rights and responsibilities.

You can get most of this information from a booklet called *Renting: Your Rights and Responsibilities*. This booklet will give you information about your rights as a tenant in rental accommodation and your responsibilities, such as household maintenance and paying your rent on time.

You may also be responsible for paying for the cost of the reconnection of the utilities, that is to have gas, electricity, water and telephone turned on. When you leave a rental property it is your responsibility to notify the electricity, telephone water and gas companies that you have left and are no longer responsible for the bills.

When you move into a place you need to make sure that you understand all of the papers that you sign.

Do not sign anything unless you are fully aware of all terms and conditions, and you are sure you understand them clearly. If you would like clarification of any documents you have to sign you can ask staff at the Academy for assistance.

Part-time Work

If you are holding a student visa and thinking of looking for part-time work, please note that you must have work permission from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to work up to 20 hours per week.

Employment Rights

There is a range of external agencies where you can ask to assist with employment related issues. Here is a listing of agencies where you can get help:

1) WorkCover Authority & Occupational Health

The Victorian WorkCover Authority is the manager of Victoria's workplace safety system, and provides information on Workcover and workplace occupational health & safety issues.

For more information, please visit the website: www.workcover.vic.gov.au or contact Victoria WorkCover Authority:

Level 24, 222 Exhibition Street, Melbourne
Phone: 03 9641 1555
Toll free: 1800 136 089
Fax: 03 9641 1222

2) Equal Opportunity Commission

Receives complaints from people who feel they have been treated unfairly, have been discriminated against or are experiencing sexual harassment. For more information, please visit: www.eoc.vic.gov.au or contact:

Enquiries line:
Phone: 03 9281 7100
Toll Free: 1800 134 142

Commission Offices:
Level 3, 380 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne
Phone: 03 9281 7111
Fax: 03 9281 7171
Email: eoc@vicnet.au

3) Australian Taxation Office

Provides information on taxation and superannuation issues. For more details, please visit: www.ato.gov.au or contact these Victorian Taxation Offices. Phone 132861 for an appointment.

4) Wageline

Provides information on rates of pay and conditions of employment, award information, and employee entitlements regarding annual leave, sick leave, redundancy pay, superannuation and related issues.

For more information, please visit www.wagenet.gov.au or contact Office of Workplace services – Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business:

Melbourne Branch
8th Floor Customs House
414 Latrobe Street, Melbourne 3000
Phone: 1300 363 264

5) Job Watch

Investigates exploitation in employment and training, and handles complaints and inquiries from the general public regarding annual leave, notice pay, sick leave, redundancy pay and related issues. For further detail information, please visit: www.home.vicnet.net.au/jobwatch or contact Job Watch :

53 Drummond Street, Carlton 3053
Phone: 03 9662 1933
Toll Free: 1800 331617
Email: jobwatch@vicnet.net.au

6) Legal Aid Commission

Offers a free legal telephone advice service and can assist with applications for legal assistance. Please visit www.legalaid.vic.gov.au for more information or contact the following Victoria Legal Aid Office:

Melbourne Branch
350 Queen Street
Melbourne 3000
Phone: 03 9269 0234

7) Australian Industrial Relations Commission

AIRC functions broadly to facilitate agreement making between employers and employees or organisations of employees about wages and conditions of employment and to ensure that a safety net of fair minimum wages and conditions is established and maintained. For more information, please visit: www.airc.gov.au or contact the Commission and registry :

Level 42 Nauru House
80 Collins Street, Melbourne
Phone: 03 8661 7777
Fax: 03 9654 6812

Money & Banks

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

It is a good idea to set up an Australian bank account. You will need to provide your visa and evidence of residency. Banking services in Australia are extremely competitive. Over 20 local and numerous international banking groups are represented in Australia.

All major banks have a branch in cities and regional centres. Most shopping centres have Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) facilities. These machines can be used for deposits and, in many instances, withdrawals 24 hours a day.

Many department stores, supermarkets and specialist shops have electronic transfer terminals (EFTPOS) where cash withdrawals can also be made in addition to purchasing goods.

Normal Bank Trading Hours

9.30 am – 4.00 pm Monday to Thursday

9.30 am – 5.00 pm Friday

Some banks are open Saturday mornings

Banks operating in Victoria:

- ANZ Bank
- Bank of Melbourne
- CitiBank
- Commonwealth Bank
- National Australia Bank
- Westpac
- Bank of China
- Bendigo Bank
- Colonial State Bank
- Hong Kong Bank
- St George Bank

When you open your bank account the bank will ask you for your **Tax File Number**.

Credit cards

Credit cards are widely accepted around Australia. The most commonly accepted credit cards are American Express, Bankcard, Diners International, Mastercard, Visa and their affiliates.

Currency

Australia uses a dollars and cents system of decimal currency with 100 cents in a dollar. The bank notes in use are \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100. Coins used are the silver coloured 5 cent, 10 cent, 20 cent and 50 cent and the gold coloured \$1 and \$2 coins.

Applying for a Tax File Number

Tax file numbers are used by the Australian Tax Office to identify people when they pay tax. You do not have to have a Tax File Number if you do not want one, however, if you do not give your bank or employer your Tax File Number, any income you earn (including interest on your bank account) will be taxed at a higher rate than if you had given your Tax File Number to your bank or employer.

You can apply for a Tax File Number by going to the local post office and asking for an application form. Follow the instructions on the form and you will be issued with a Tax File Number. Remember to keep your Tax File Number in a safe place and do not disclose it to anyone other than your employer or bank.

LIVING IN MELBOURNE

Australia

Australia is a land of contrasts - sweeping golden beaches, coral reefs rich with marine life, tropical rainforests, mountain ranges, vast grazing lands and sparse deserts. One of the oldest continents, Australia is the only country to occupy an entire continent.

Surrounded by the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Australia has many animals and plants that are unique on the planet. The surface geology is typically old and flat, with a major mountain range stretching down the eastern coast and another mountain range in the north west of the continent.

Victoria

About 36 per cent of Victoria is forest. The Murray is the State's longest river and there are a number of large inland lakes. Victoria's vast coastline extends over 1600 kilometres, bordering the Southern Ocean and Bass Strait and separating the Australian mainland from Tasmania.

Victoria is the most densely populated of Australia's States and Territories. Some 26 per cent of all Australians live in Victoria and Melbourne is the nation's second largest city and capital of this state.

Melbourne

Melbourne is the capital of the State of Victoria. It is situated on the Yarra River and around Port Phillip Bay with its beautiful beaches and water sports facilities. It is a beautiful spacious city with all the parks, gardens, sporting venues and scenic places that space and natural resources allow.

Melbourne is a world-renowned cultural, artistic, financial and communications centre, served by an international airport, a cargo and passenger seaport, and rail links to neighbouring States. Melbourne, once voted the world's 'most liveable city', enjoys clean fresh air and beautiful parks and gardens.

Melbourne is considered to be the shopping capital of Australia and offers some of Australia's biggest shopping complexes as well as sophisticated, exclusive boutiques and a host of lively and popular markets.

One quarter of Melbourne's population was born overseas, making it one of the world's most multicultural cities. There are now people from 140 nations living harmoniously together.

This broad ethnic mix has brought many benefits to the city, including a wide range of cuisines and over 2,300 elegant restaurants, bistros and cafes. Melbourne has an excellent public transport system with trams, trains and buses providing an extensive network throughout the city and suburbs.

The population is approximately 4 million. Melbourne is a sprawling city with suburbs extending up to 50km from the centre of the city.

The city centre is on the banks of the Yarra River, 5km from Port Phillip Bay. The city centre features world class:

- *Department stores*
- *Historical architecture*
- *Theatres, galleries and arts centres*

Melbourne is only a short distance from many beautiful beaches, as well as the Victorian mountain regions, where skiing is popular during winter.

Sometimes called the culinary capital of Australia, Melbourne has a vast array of restaurants, offering a variety of international cuisine.

Bustling Chinatown, in the heart of the city, serves up the finest of Asian cuisine and culture. Several other Melbourne streets are dedicated to Vietnamese, Japanese, Italian and Greek food - cuisine to suit every palate and many to suit a student's budget.

Climate

Melbourne enjoys a temperate climate with four distinct seasons in the year - spring, summer, winter and autumn. Below is a guide to the average daily temperatures:

Spring	September - November	12 - 22 degrees
Summer	December to February	28 - 32 degrees
Autumn	March to May	12 - 20 degrees
Winter	June to August	10 - 15 degrees

Melbourne does not have a specific wet season - it can rain at any time of the year. Sports and other outdoor activities are possible at all times of the year.

Festivals

- International Comedy Festival
- International Festival of the Arts
- Chinese New Year Parade
- Moomba Festival

International Sporting Events

- Spring Racing Carnival (Melbourne Cup)
- Australian Open (Grand Slam tennis)
- Grand Prix Motor Racing
- World Series and Test cricket
- Bells Beach Surf Classic

Art

Australian contemporary arts reflect the world's oldest continuous cultural traditions and also a diverse, multicultural society. Our visual and performing arts communities receive international acclaim for their vibrancy, originality and cutting-edge work in the arts, literature, stage and cinema, dance, classical music and contemporary Australian rock music.

The National Museum of Australia opened as part of Australia's Centenary of Federation celebrations in 2001. It is co-located with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in the nation's capital city of Canberra and adds to more than 1000 museums throughout Australia.

Multiculturalism

More than 100 ethnic groups are represented in Australia, making Australia one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. Australia's dynamic multiculturalism can be attributed to its unique combination of Indigenous cultures, early European settlement and immigration from all parts of the world.

Australians value the wealth of cultural diversity and social sophistication that international students bring to our campuses and our communities. We take great care in looking after international students and helping them to adjust to the Australian way of life. International students also gain great benefits from their education in Australia and make lifelong friendships.

Language

Although English is the official language, a host of other languages are spoken in Australia. As one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world, many Australians are naturally fluent in other languages. More than 2.4 million Australians speak a language other than English at home. Within the education and training system, about 15 per cent of those of working age studying for an educational qualification have English as a second language. More than 800,000 Australians speak a European Union language, apart from English, in the home. Another 800,000 Australians speak an Asian language in the home.

In Australia not only is there the opportunity to improve your English through specialist study in an English-speaking environment, but all sectors of Australian education and training provide tuition in many other languages as well.

English, as it is spoken in Australia, is very easily understood by nearly all people from other English-speaking nations. While there are some minor differences in accent between the cities and country areas, the difference is much less than you will find in America, Britain and Canada where French is also spoken. As you improve your English in Australia you will learn some of our slang, and have much fun explaining the meanings to your friends and relatives at home.

Religion

Australia is predominantly a Christian country however all religions are represented in our multicultural society. Australians respect the freedom of people to practice their choice of religion. Churches, mosques, temples and synagogues are located in most major cities. Some universities have their own spiritual groups on campus.

Clean, Safe, Cosmopolitan

Students from all over the world come to Australia to take advantage of our world-class education and enjoy our friendly hospitality and cultural diversity. Australia has low crime rates and strict gun control laws providing a safe environment in which to learn and travel. With one of the highest standards of living in the world, Australia offers modern transport systems, convenient telecommunications, cosmopolitan shopping complexes and excellent health services.

Visitors from many parts of the world are attracted by Australia's spectacular natural environment and the distinctive personality and friendliness of the Australian people. Australia is rich in the arts and is keen to preserve and display its diverse cultural heritage.

Australians are also environmentally conscious and keen to preserve the country's natural beauty and scenery. Our Clean Up Australia campaign is being adopted worldwide.

Health Care

Australia has a very good health care system. All Australians pay a Medicare levy (additional tax) to fund the public health system and ensure everyone gets access to public system doctors, hospitals and other health care services. People who pay extra into a private health insurance fund receive certain privileges when they use private health care services. As well as the usual services available in just about any Australian suburb or town, most Australian institutions also provide special health care services and advice for students.

International students studying in Australia are required to have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the duration of their student visa, which will be arranged for students on their behalf by Australian Education Academy Pty Ltd prior to arrival in Australia.

Food

Australia has a fantastic variety of food. Our top quality meat, fish, fruits and vegetables are exported to markets all around the globe. There is a large range of fruit and vegetables available at Australian produce markets. You should have no difficulty in finding the foods that you are used to at home.

You can sample almost every type of cuisine available throughout the world in our many restaurants. There are elegant restaurants or typical Aussie pubs. Ethnic restaurants offer cuisines from all around the world. Good food at reasonable prices can be found at bistros or cafes. And for those who like takeaway, most of the major global fast food chains are well represented. The adventurous can try some of our 'bush tucker'.

Electricity

The electrical current in Australia is 240/250 volts AC, 50 cycles. The Australian three-pin plug is extremely safe. Adaptors are usually required for most foreign appliances. A transformer may be required if you bring an appliance from overseas that operates on a different voltage.

Transport

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

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

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

Telephones

Australia has a modern telecommunications system with mobile and internet access generally available at low cost. Public telephones are available at all Post Offices, shopping centres and are often situated on street corners. Public pay phones accept a variety of coins and Phonecards. Phonecards are pre-paid for use in public pay phones and can be bought at a large number of retail outlets in denominations of \$A5, \$A10, \$A20 and \$A50. Credit phones take most major credit cards such as American Express, Visa, Mastercard and Diners International and can be found at international and domestic airports, central city locations and hotels. Mobile phones are very popular and can be purchased from a number of retailers.

Sports & Recreation

Australians are very keen on sport and outdoor activities and have gained a worldwide reputation, both as individuals and as teams. Hosting the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, the Australian Open Tennis Championship and the Grand Prix Motor Race highlights Australia as a leading destination for international events.

Australia has more than 120 national sporting organisations and thousands of state, regional and club bodies. It is estimated that 6.5 million people, about a third of the population, are registered sports participants. While there are over 120 sporting organisations, Australians also take part in bushwalking, fishing, boating and water sports.

Travel

During semester breaks, you may like to venture beyond the capital cities to experience more of Australia's spectacular natural environment and great physical beauty — national parks, The Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu, Uluru and the Tasmanian Wilderness.

Budgeting

You should work out a budget covering accommodation, food, transport, clothing and entertainment. Childcare, if applicable, should also be taken into account.

The average international student in Australia spends about \$400 per week on accommodation, food, clothing, entertainment, transport, international and domestic travel, telephone and incidental costs. While this is a realistic guide, it is important to remember that individual circumstances will vary by location, course and lifestyle.

Tipping

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

A Good Choice for Study

There are more than 80,000 overseas students currently studying in Australia. They have chosen Australia for several reasons:

- *Australia has a high quality education system, the equal of any country in the world*
- *Australia offers traditional education in reputable institutes, schools and universities*
- *Awards from Australian institutions of higher education are recognised internationally*
- *Australian universities, colleges and schools have established networks of support to help overseas students*

- *The Australian education system includes informality and accessibility of academic staff, the availability of computers, small group tutorials and close supervision*
- *Living costs and tuition costs compare well with other countries and most overseas students are permitted to work part-time*
- *Australia is a safe, stable country with a pleasant climate*

Australia Welcomes Overseas Students

Overseas students are welcomed in Australia because they:

- *Contribute to the development of people and institutions both in their home country and in Australia.*
- *Contribute to the Australia's research capability*
- *Develop cultural, educational and economic links between Australians and people of other nations.*

Australia has a long history of involvement in international education development, staff and student exchange programs and scholarships.

Study Methods

In Australia, much emphasis is placed upon private (individual) study along the lines of assignments, on research and learning to analyse data and present arguments about subject matter, and on being willing to defend one's argument.

All these involve heavy use of libraries, intensive note taking in lectures, and active participation in the learning process (as opposed to passive listening and rote learning).

To be a successful student in Australia, you will need to adapt to these methods of learning, but most education institutions in Australia are very willing to help as they offer counselling services and assistance to develop effective study skills.

Many lecturers in Australia have vast experience teaching overseas students, they understand the difficulties in getting used to different study methods and they will be patient in helping you to develop new skills.

Cost of Living

Melbourne is a reasonably priced city, providing good quality affordable living and abundant accommodation. Students will need a minimum of AUD\$17,000 to AUD\$20,000 per year (excluding tuition fees) to cover living expenses.

The lifestyle in Australia is safe and friendly. Australians have a high standard of living. The climate is pleasant, there is plenty of food and the vast natural resources in Australia enable most people to live well.

Fruit, vegetables and meat are available fresh and at reasonable prices. Clothing and personal effects are usually good quality and available at a wide variety of prices.

Below is a price table of typical daily items. This is only a guide. Remember that you can shop around for items such as clothing and shoes to find a cheaper source:

Food	Personal Effects/Services
Milk 1 litre - \$1.50	Shoes 1 pair - \$70.00
Bread 1 loaf - \$3.00	Jeans 1 pair - \$80.00
Apples 1 kg - \$4.00	Toothpaste 140g - \$3.00
Potatoes 1 kg - \$3.00	Shampoo 500ml - \$5.00
Beefsteak 1 kg - \$15.00	T-shirt - \$20.00
Eggs 1 dozen - \$4.00	Hairdresser - \$20.00 upwards
Cereal - \$3.00	Newspaper - \$1.50
Fruit Juice 2 litres - \$5.00	Cinema ticket - \$15.00
Rice 1 kg - \$2.00	Public transport city and inner suburbs - \$6.00 for a day pass