



Homestay student orientation manual

Orientation manual

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Monash University

[Monash University](#) was named after [General Sir John Monash](#), who was born on 27 June 1865. He was a man who pursued knowledge for its own sake, with an eye to its application. As a scholar and a man of action, he exemplified the university's motto *Ancora Imparo* – "I am still learning", attributed to Michelangelo. The university adopted the motto after it was established by the Parliament of Victoria on 30 May 1958.

- Monash University is one of the largest universities in Australia
- Five campuses in Australia
- Over 49,500 students
- Over 10,000 international students
- 10 faculties - Arts, Art & Design, Business & Economics, Education, Engineering, Information Technology, Law, Medicine, Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences, Science.
- Overseas campus in Malaysia; joint Graduate School in China; Research Academy in India, Learning Centre in Italy.
 - Clayton is the main campus, with approximately 22,000 students and is located 40 minutes from the Melbourne Central business district

Homestay Accommodation Services (HAS)

- HAS is responsible for:
 - Arranging your Homestay accommodation
 - Ongoing support during your Homestay including 24-hour [emergency](#) contact
 - General communication assistance
 - Assisting students who report suspected child abuse, including from the students themselves, and treating these reports seriously and consistently with Homestay and Monash procedures.
- Homestay staff are available for appointments by calling one of the numbers below.
- Many issues that arise in Homestay are best resolved by talking about the situation with your Homestay Host. If the problem cannot be resolved between you and your Homestay Host or if the issue is serious and requires immediate attention, please contact HAS.
- If you have a Grievance you can follow the [Grievance Policy](#) to resolve your issue
- If you feel your concerns or issues have not been properly dealt with, you should contact [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)

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Your Homestay

Homestay enables real insight into how people live in Australia. The following is a guide to an enjoyable and rewarding Homestay experience.

Background information on Homestay Hosts

- Australia is a multicultural country and Homestay Hosts are from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.
- Host family structures are not limited to the traditional 'nuclear model'. For example, there are single women, couples without children, single mothers with children, and retired couples.
- If someone on your Host Profile is listed as a 'Visitor', he or she is usually a person who does not normally live in the home but may visit your Host while you are living there.
- Homestay families host for various reasons. Many Homestay families are interested in having cross-cultural interaction, while others decide to Host because they want to 'internationalise' their children by exposing them to other cultures. A lot of retired couples host for company because their children have all left home.
- All members of your Host family aged 18 and over have provided us with a valid Working with Children Checks (similar to police check) as a form of reference/security.
- All Homestay families arranged by HAS have been interviewed and undergone orientation before hosting their first student.
- Your Homestay can host up to three international students at any one time. There are many international students studying in Melbourne so these students could be from Monash University, Monash College Diplomas, Monash University Foundation Year or from other institutions.
- During your stay, your Host will provide you with your own bedroom with a bed, linen, study desk, chair, lamp and storage space for your clothing.
- 65% of households in Australia have pets. This is partly because space is not an issue and most people have a backyard. Pets are often treated as members of the family. We do our best to accommodate students with strong reasons for not wanting to live in a household with pets (eg an allergy or a phobia).

Be a member of the family

- Your Homestay will treat you as a part of the family, and not as a guest.
- Please be considerate and accommodating of your Homestay Host's lifestyle.
- Your Host will inform you of all household rules at the start of your stay. We encourage you to clarify these rules if you have any questions.
- Show initiative in helping out around the house with little chores – it's a great way of initiating interaction and learning about the Australian culture.
- Please remember to be polite and say "please" when asking for something, and "thank you" when something has been done or given to you.
- The Homestay experience is designed to assist students to develop their English skills so your Host should speak to you in English. You should also be proactive about communicating in English. Even when you are not being directly addressed, your Hosts should communicate with each other in English.
- You should advise Homestay staff if the information about your Host family members, pets, etc is different from the Host profile that we sent you.
- If you are going out please tell your Homestay Host where you are going and approximately what time you will be home. Your Homestay family knows that you are in a new country and will be worried if they don't know where you are.
- Your Homestay arrangement **must not** be considered a hotel service.
- You are not expected to baby sit or child mind. If your Homestay Host asks you to do this, you should tell them you are not obliged to do this and then report the matter to HAS.

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- If your Host goes away for the weekend or for a longer period, they should inform HAS staff of these changes so that we can make alternative arrangements for you.
- Your Host has been informed that personal greetings and farewells differ from culture to culture. In many Asian countries, it is common to bow. In other countries it is common to shake hands or kiss on each cheek. For some cultures, a hug is also considered an acceptable display of affection. A lot depends on how well people know each other beforehand.
 - Both Hosts and students need to understand that physical contact and displays of affection should be in a manner that will not offend or make others feel uncomfortable.
 - If you ever feel uncomfortable about how a Host family member shows affection to you, you can take the lead and demonstrate to them what would make you feel comfortable in this area. If you find it difficult to communicate about this matter, talk to HAS staff or Student Engagement or your Guardian, if you are aged under 18.
- Your Homestay is required to respect your privacy so you must respect the privacy of everyone in your Homestay. It is important for you to make people feel comfortable with you in their home.
- You should not compare your Homestay with your fellow students' homestay. If you have any serious concerns about your Host making comparisons with others, you can refer the matter to HAS staff.
- Please ask your Homestay Host for permission before inviting your friends to visit you.

Bathroom and Laundry

- Showering is more common than taking a bath. We often have water restrictions that everyone needs to respect.
- Please do not be offended if your Host insists you only spend four or five minutes in the shower.
- Please check with your Homestay Host how the laundry is done. You might be asked to leave your laundry in the laundry basket or shown how to do your own laundry.

Electrical appliances

- Ask your Host how to use electrical appliances such as the microwave, and the oven.
- If you are planning to bring electrical items you may need an adaptor and/or transformer.

Heating, cooling and use of facilities

- Most homes are heated by a central heating system or portable heaters to heat individual rooms.
- Due to low humidity in Melbourne, many homes do not have air conditioning.
- Water conservation is an important issue in Australia. **Please respect Melbourne's water restrictions.**
- You must be careful not to overuse utilities in the home such as electricity and water.

House keys

- Your Homestay Host should provide you with your own key or organise a suitable alternative that gives you access to the house. If you feel that it is difficult to access the home when your family is out, you should talk to your Host or to HAS staff.
- If you are given a house key, take good care of it and return it before you leave.
- If you lose your house key, you will be responsible for the cost of replacing the key or door lock.

Internet

- Most, but not all, Homestays offer their students internet access.
- The cost of internet is **not** included in the Homestay fee.
- Your Host can charge you approximately \$7 to \$10 per week for internet usage. Some Hosts will ask for one month's payment at the start of your stay (i.e. if the cost is \$10 per week, they could ask you for \$40 upfront). Please discuss with your Host how much they will charge you and when you should pay.

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- Homestay Hosts can charge per week or per month. For example, if your Host charges \$40 per month and you use the internet for one hour per day, the cost is still \$40 per month.
- Please ask your Host what their internet limit is and how you can track your usage. In Australia, download and upload are counted as internet usage. Downloading YouTube, computer programs, music or movies uses up a Homestay's internet allocation very quickly; eg a 12-minute video uses about 15GB.
- Most Hosts are on a limited internet plan. Some plans are limited to 2 GB per month. When they reach their monthly limit, your Host's internet will become extremely slow. This means everyone in your Homestay is disadvantaged for the rest of the month.
- Other Homestay Hosts are on a plan which has a financial penalty; if they exceed their usage, they are charged very high rates for excess usage (15c per MB is a standard excess charge). If your Host can show that you are responsible for the excess usage, you will have to pay the bill. Sometimes this bill can be over \$1,000!
- If you bring your own laptop and your Host gives you wireless access, please restrict your usage to email, Skype and research for assignments.
- **Make sure that you understand clearly your Homestay Host's internet usage rules before you start using the internet. If in any doubt about anything, check with your Host.**
- If you are using Skype late at night, please remember to keep down the level of noise as your Host family may already be sleeping.
- **If you are a Monash student, you also have a Monash IT account.** If you want to access the computer labs and wireless network when you are on campus, you will need to register with eSolutions at Monash (<http://monash.edu/esolutions/new-students.html>). Please be aware that your Monash account also has usage limits.

Meals

- Meals in Australia could be quite different from what you are used to and may include more meat. Australians may eat more pre-made meals, frozen meals, and home-delivered meals than you are used to. Tell your Homestay Host if you are finding the meals too big, too small, too spicy, etc.
- Tell your Homestay Host the things that you are not able to eat and/or are allergic to.
- Breakfast is generally self-served and might include bread (or toast), cereal, fruit or yoghurt. Your Homestay Host will show you where to find your breakfast items, then expect you to help yourself.
- Lunch is provided by your Homestay. If your Host asks you to prepare it yourself, check with them which ingredients you can use. If your Host makes your lunch and you are not used to the food, tell them what you prefer. If you have any issues about your meals it is important to discuss with your Host. If you need advice on how to discuss this subject, you can contact HAS staff on 9902 0122 or 9902 0318.
- If you are eating out with your Homestay, please offer to pay for yourself. If you do not want the extra expense of eating out, you should discuss this with your Host. If you do not join your Homestay family when they eat out, your Host will provide you with a meal at home.

Telephone

- We recommend you buy a pre-paid mobile phone or if you bring your own mobile to Australia, you can buy a local SIM card for it.
- You should always give your Homestay Host your mobile phone number so they can contact you in case of emergency.
- Remember to ask your Homestay Host before using their phone, even if you are paying for the call.
- Calls to mobile phones are timed at variable rates.

Valuables

- Please keep your valuables including your passport and ticket in a safe place (eg locked in your suitcase).
- Before departure, check that you have all your valuables, and carry them in your hand luggage.

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Dangers and annoyances

- Most people you will meet in Australia are very friendly. Remember it is all right to say no and walk away if someone approaches you with a suggestion you do not like or do not want to do.
- If you are home alone in your Homestay and a stranger comes to the door, **do not** open the door and let them in. Go to a window to see who it is. Under Australian law, you do not have to open the door unless it is the police.
- If you feel uncomfortable or threatened while you are on campus, call **9905 3333** for assistance.
- If you feel threatened in your Homestay, you must contact HAS immediately. During office hours, ring 9905 8326 or 9902 0122.
- Our **out-of-hours EMERGENCY** phone number is: 0411 475 232. **Please use this number only in an emergency.**

Financial

Credit cards

- Before travelling, check that your credit card will be accepted at Australian ATMs.
- The most widely accepted credit cards in Australia are Visa and MasterCard.
- Normally ATMs are available 24/7 in Australia.

Carrying cash

- **Do not carry large amounts of cash.** Only take with you as much money as you will need each day.
- Ask a friend to come with you if you are going to withdraw cash from an ATM, especially after dark or if the ATM is situated away from main roads.
- Do not count money in public.

Cost of living

- All payments to your Host, except for telephone and Internet, are managed by HAS.
- The [cost of living](#) in Melbourne will be different from what you are used to in your own country. It is a good idea to check out the [Monash website](#) so you can prepare your budget before you travel.

Medical and insurance

Injury/illness

- Medical services are available at or nearby each campus.
- If you are ill or injured while at home you might be taken by your Homestay Host to their local surgery.
- If your Doctor prescribes medication, take your prescription to the chemist. Non-prescribed medicine can be purchased over the counter from any chemist.

Dentists

- [Dental service](#) is available at 21 Chancellors Walk, Monash University, Clayton campus.

OSHC health insurance or Travel Insurance

- If you have a student visa you must ensure that your [Overseas Student Health Care](#) cover is always valid.
- If you have taken out travel insurance, keep your receipts as you will need them for any insurance claim.

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Smoking and alcohol

- The legal age for drinking and smoking in Australia is eighteen.
- You may be asked for ID when purchasing cigarettes and/or alcohol.
- **All Monash campuses are totally smoke-free.** All indoor areas in Australia are also smoke free (non-smoking). In most public areas you cannot smoke within ten metres of a building.
- Drinking alcohol in public places is limited to licensed areas such as pubs and restaurants.

Transport

Public transport in Australia can be quite different to the transportation in your own country.

Getting to and from your campus

- Your Homestay Host will advise you how to use public transport to travel to your campus.
- Ask your Homestay Host to write the instructions on paper – step by step.
- We encourage your Host to travel at least once with you on public transport.
- Remember to carry essential details like your Homestay address in case you get lost.
- **International students are not eligible for transport concessions. You must pay full fare.**
- **Be careful about travelling at night;** especially when using public transport.
- **Avoid walking alone at night.**
- **Do not hitch hike under any circumstances.**
- Please do not expect your Homestay Host to provide transport for you (eg drive you to and from the train station at night).

Public transport

- Melbourne's [public transport](#) system covers the Metropolitan area with Zone 1 and Zone 2 travel.
- You must buy a [myki](#) (a reusable travel card) before you can start travelling on buses, trains and trams. Your card can store either a [myki pass](#) (travel days) or [myki money](#) (dollar value) to pay for your journey. When your myki money balance gets low or your pass runs out, you top up your card to keep travelling.
- Remember to **touch on** and **touch off** each time you get on or off public transport.
- Trains doors open manually but close automatically.
- Buses: get on at the front door and off at the back door.
- Some services do not operate late at night, and there is a limited service at weekends. You can check [timetables](#) or download a free [Public Transport Victoria](#) app for your mobile.

Taxi

- When travelling late at night by yourself, it is best to use a taxi.
- All passengers must wear seatbelts.

Bicycle

- By law bike riders must wear a helmet, ride on the road (not on the footpath) and turn on their lights at night.