Homestay student orientation manual
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Background information on Australia

Australia

Name of country: The Commonwealth of Australia
Head of country: Queen Elizabeth II
Capital: Canberra
Area: 7,682,300 square kilometres (Hong Kong = 1,100 sq km)
Population: 22 million (Hong Kong = 6.84 million, Korea = 48 million, China = 1328 million)
Currency: Australian Dollar (AUD$1=100 cents)
Notes: $5, 10, 20, 50, 100.
Coins: $1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50.

- Australia is the largest island and the smallest continent.
- Following Russia, Canada, China, America and Brazil, Australia is the sixth largest country.
- The population of Australia is just over 22 million.
- Australia consists of 6 states and 2 territories. Monash University is in the state of Victoria.

Victoria

- Victoria is known as the Garden State because of its many parks and gardens.
- Victoria is the second smallest state but has the second largest population after New South Wales (NSW) and the highest population density.
- The population of Victoria is almost 6 million and New South Wales is over 7 million.

Melbourne

- Melbourne is the second largest city in Australia (after Sydney).
- Melbourne was the home of the 2006 Commonwealth Games.
- In 1956, Melbourne hosted the first ever Olympics in the Southern Hemisphere.
- Victorians are renowned for their passion for sport. The biggest horseracing event, the Melbourne Cup, is well known for bringing the country to a virtual standstill. Other famous international events hosted in Melbourne include the F1 Grand Prix in March, and the Australian Open Tennis in January – one of the four Grand Slam events.
- Melbourne is one of the most multicultural cities in Australia.
- One out of every four Australians was either born overseas or one of their parents was born overseas.
- At least 25 % of the households in Victoria speak a language other than English.

Time difference/time zones

- Australia has three time zones.
- Victoria has Daylight Saving (Summer Time). It starts from the first Sunday in October and finishes on the first Sunday in April the following year. Clocks are put forward one hour when Daylight Saving starts.
- Hong Kong is two hours behind Melbourne (3 hours during Daylight Saving).
- Japan is one hour behind Melbourne (2 hours during Daylight Saving).
- Korea is one hour behind Melbourne (2 hours during Daylight Saving).
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Weather

- In Australia the climate is the opposite of countries in Asia.
- Spring (Sep-Nov), Summer (Dec-Feb), Autumn (Mar-May), Winter (Jun-Aug).
- The weather in Melbourne is variable. It is said that Melbourne has four seasons in a day.

Average temperatures in Melbourne

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Season | Summer | Autumn | Winter | Spring | Summer

Distance between major cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Pair</th>
<th>Distance (kms)</th>
<th>Time (by bus)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne – Sydney</td>
<td>872 kms</td>
<td>14.5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne – Brisbane</td>
<td>1674 kms</td>
<td>27.5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne – Alice Springs</td>
<td>2264 kms</td>
<td>32.0 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Useful websites

- Monash University: [www.monash.edu](http://www.monash.edu)
- Tourism Victoria: [www.visitvictoria.com](http://www.visitvictoria.com)
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
- Two overseas campuses (Malaysia and South Africa)
- Clayton campus
  - The main campus
  - Approximately 22,000 students
  - Approximately 40 minutes from Melbourne central business district

Homestay Accommodation Services (HAS)

- HAS is responsible for your:
  → Homestay accommodation
  → Ongoing support during your homestay including 24-hour emergency contact
  → General communication assistance
- If you have any queries or feedback in relation to your homestay, please contact us:
  
  Phone: +61 3 9902 0122 or 9905 8481
  Email: has@mcpl.edu.au

- At the completion of your stay in homestay, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Your feedback is important for continuous improvement of our services.
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 come from a diverse 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 generally 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 as they wish to ‘internationalise’ their children by exposing them to other cultures. A lot of retired couples host for company as their children have all left home.
- All homestay families arranged by HAS have provided current police checks and been interviewed prior to hosting their first student.

Meals

- Meals in Australia are likely to 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 mother if you are finding the meals too big, too small, too spicy, etc.
- Tell your host mother 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 mother may show you where to find your breakfast items, then expect you to help yourself.
- Lunch is provided by your homestay. If your host mother asks you to prepare it yourself, check with her which ingredients you can use. If she makes your lunch and you are not used to the food, let her know your preference. It is important to discuss with your host mother any issues you have regarding your meals. If you need advice on how to approach this subject with her, you can contact homestay staff on 9902 0122 or 9902 0318.
- If you are eating out with your homestay, please offer to pay for yourself.

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). You should discuss with your host how much they will charge you and when you should pay.
- 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 towards internet usage. Downloading YouTube, computer programs, music and movies will use up a homestay’s internet allocation very quickly. For example, a twelve-minute video can use about 15GB.
- Most hosts are on a limited internet plan. Some plans are as low as 2GB per month. When they reach their monthly limit, your host’s internet will slow right down to dial-up speed. This means everyone in the household 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 your host allows you to use their home computer, please respect their property. Do not download programs or rearrange or change their folders, files or icons.
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- 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 be mindful to keep down the level of noise as your host family may already be sleeping.
- Please remember: you should 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 ITS at Monash (http://monash.edu/esolutions/new-students.html). Please be aware that your Monash account also has usage limits.

Being a member of the family

- Your homestay has been orientated to accept and treat you as a part of the family. You will not be treated as a guest but as a family member. Please be considerate and accommodating of your homestay host’s lifestyle and any house rules that they may have.
- 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 always be polite and say “please” when asking for something, and “thank you” when something has been done or given to you.

Telephone

- We recommend you purchase a pre-paid mobile phone or, if you bring your own mobile to Australia, buy a local SIM card for it.
- You should always give your host mother your mobile phone number so she can contact you in case of emergency.
- Phone calls are not included in homestay. If you want to use your host’s phone, please consult them first as to how your phone costs are going to be paid.
- 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 various rates.
- To make international calls from your mobile phone at reasonable rates, we recommend you buy a pre-paid phone card from your local convenience store.

Heating, cooling and use of facilities

- Most homes are heated by a central heating system or portable heaters used 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 and water restrictions are currently in place. Please respect Melbourne’s water restrictions.

Bathroom

- Showering is more common than bathing in Australia. Due to the drought, water restrictions are in place. Everyone has to respect these restrictions because our water usage is being monitored. You can spend a maximum of four minutes in the shower.
- Some homes have a ‘continuous heating system’ for hot water. Others have a ‘tank water system’ where the supply of hot water is limited.

Laundry

- It is best to check with your homestay host how the laundry is done in the house. You may be asked to leave your laundry in the laundry basket or to do your own laundry.
Valuables

- While in Australia please store your valuables including your passport and flight ticket in a safe place (probably best to keep them locked in your suitcase).
- Before departure, check that you have all your valuables, and carry them in your hand luggage, not in your suitcase.
- When going out, take with you only as much money as you think you will need each day.

Going out/inviting friends

- If you are going out please advise 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 concerned if they don’t know where you are.
- If you are going to invite friends home please advise your homestay host.

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 will need an adaptor and/or transformer.
- Please remember it is rude to turn off the television or change channels when other family members are watching. If there is a special program on television that you wish to watch, please ask before changing channels.

Privacy

- Please respect the privacy of everyone in your homestay.

Pets

- 65% of households in Australia have pets. This is partly because space is not an issue and most people have a backyard. Pets are generally 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 (e.g. an allergy or a phobia).

House keys

- If you are given a house key please take care of it and return it before you leave.
Medical and insurance

Injury/illness

- Medical services are available at each campus.
- If you are ill or injured while at home you might be taken by your Homestay Host to their local surgery.
- If the Doctor prescribes medication, take your prescription to the chemist. Non-prescribed medicine can be purchased over the counter from any chemist.
- The standard fee for a visit to the Doctor is between $50 - 100.

Doctors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cantonese / Mandarin</th>
<th>Dr. Adamina Ip</th>
<th>Purruna Medical Centre</th>
<th>1/318 Stephenson Rd</th>
<th>Mount Waverley</th>
<th>3149</th>
<th>9807 7338</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Stephen Tam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Dr Yun Nan-ae</td>
<td>Hanin Medical Centre</td>
<td>1st F, 65 Carrington Rd, Box Hill 3128</td>
<td>9899 7700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Dr Mark Preston</td>
<td>Elsternwick Clinic</td>
<td>74A Orrong Road, Elsternwick 3185</td>
<td>9528 6929</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>International Medical Services</td>
<td>4th Floor 250 Collins St, Melbourne</td>
<td>9639 0050</td>
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</table>

Dentists

Dental service is available at Building 10, Monash University, Clayton campus.


OSHC health insurance

- It is the responsibility of every international student on a student visa to ensure that they have valid Overseas Student Health Care cover at all times.

Travel insurance

- Remember to read the Handbook provided by your insurance company.
- Keep your receipts as you will need them for an insurance claim.

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 5557 or 9905 8326.
- Our out-of-hours EMERGENCY phone number is: 0411 475 232. Please use this number only in an emergency.
- We recommend you purchase a mobile phone or local SIM card for your mobile phone while you are in Australia. Give your phone number to your Homestay Host and remember to keep your phone charged and topped up with phone credits.
Financial

Travellers cheques

- Most retailers do not accept Travellers Cheques.
- You will be required to show ID (e.g. passport) when cashing Travellers Cheques.

Credit cards

- Credit cards can be used to make purchases and to withdraw cash from an ATM.
- The most widely accepted credit cards in Australia are Visa and MasterCard.
- Before travelling, check that your credit card will be accepted at Australian ATMs.
- Normally ATMs are available 24/7 in Australia.

Carrying cash

- **Do not carry large amounts of cash.**
- Ask a friend to come with you if you are going to withdraw cash from an ATM, particularly after dark or if the ATM is situated away from main roads.
- Do not count money in public.

Cost of living

The following is a guide only:

- cup of coffee: $3.50
- can of Coke: $3.00
- hot chips: $3.00
- glass of beer: $6.00
- packet of cigarettes: $19.00
- international calling card: $10.
Transport

Getting to and from your campus

- Your homestay family will advise you how to travel to your campus of study.
- Ask your Homestay Host to write the instructions on paper – step by step.
- 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.**

Public transport

- Melbourne has two public transport travel zones: 1 and 2.
- You must buy a **myki** (i.e., a reusable smart card) before you can start travelling on public transport. 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. For **myki pass** information, see [http://ptv.vic.gov.au/fares-tickets/myki/myki-pass/#1](http://ptv.vic.gov.au/fares-tickets/myki/myki-pass/#1) For myki money, see [http://ptv.vic.gov.au/fares-tickets/myki/myki-money/#1](http://ptv.vic.gov.au/fares-tickets/myki/myki-money/#1)
- You can use your myki to travel on buses, trains and trams. 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 may be a limited service at weekends. You can check timetables at [http://ptv.vic.gov.au/](http://ptv.vic.gov.au/) or download a free Public Transport Victoria app for your mobile.

Taxi

- If you are travelling late at night on your own it is best to use a taxi.
- As a guide, Melbourne (CBD) to Monash Clayton campus is approximately $60.

Walking alone at night

- This is best avoided – even though Australia is still regarded as a safe country.

Calling homestay host to pick-up

- Please do not expect your homestay family to provide transport for you.

Seatbelts

- All passengers in the vehicle must wear seatbelts.

Hitch-hiking

- Do not hitch hike under any circumstances.

Bicycles

- In Australia, by law bike riders must wear a helmet, ride on the road (not on the footpath), and at night you must have lights on your bicycle.
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.
- Smoking areas are very restricted in Australia: all indoor areas are smoke free (non-smoking) and you cannot smoke within ten metres of a building in most public areas.
- Drinking alcohol in public places is limited to licensed areas such as pubs and restaurants.

Communication channels

- Homestay staff are available for appointments by calling one of the numbers below.
- Many issues that arise in homestay are best resolved by approaching your homestay host. If the problem cannot be resolved between your and your Homestay Host or if the issue is serious and requires immediate attention, please contact HAS.

Homestay Manager  Molly Bonnefin
Phone: +61 3 9905 5557

Assistant Homestay Manager  Karen Taylor
Phone: +61 3 9905 8326

Homestay Coordinators  Nick Hu
Phone: +61 3 9905 8481
Evangeline Yang
Phone: +61 3 9902 0318

Homestay Assistant  Phone: +61 3 9902 0122