



Life in
AUSTRALIA



Life in Australia

Australia is a modern, multicultural nation with influences from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, early British settlement, and generations of migrants from around the world. While the culture has Western roots, Australia has developed its own unique identity, language, humour, and lifestyle.

Language & Religion:

- English is the national language
- Christianity is the most common religion, but people of all backgrounds and beliefs are welcome

Diversity & Inclusion:

- Australians value equality and fairness
- Multiculturalism is widely celebrated
- Festivals and cultural events include NAIDOC Week, Chinese New Year, Diwali, Ramadan, and many more

Climate & Environment:

- Australia has diverse climates: tropical north, temperate south, desert interior
- Beaches, parks, and outdoor spaces are central to everyday life

Lifestyle & Recreation:

- Australians enjoy an active, outdoor lifestyle
- Popular sports include cricket, rugby, Australian rules football, and swimming
- Cafés, restaurants, markets, and community events are common social spaces

Australian Culture

Australian culture reflects the country's values, humour, and social identity. Understanding culture will help students adapt and connect with the local community.

Key Values:

- Respect and friendliness
- Equality and fairness
- Independence and self-reliance

Communication Style:

- First names are commonly used
- Humour is common, often sarcastic



Diversity & Inclusion:

- Australians are generally open-minded and tolerant
- Cultural differences are accepted and celebrated

About Port Macquarie

Port Macquarie is a coastal city on the NSW Mid North Coast, known for:

- Beautiful beaches
- Coastal walks
- Koala population
- Surfing, fishing and boating
- Cafés, restaurants and markets
- Mild climate

Travel around the city is easy; most destinations are a 10–15-minute drive away.

The CBD sits along the Hastings River with beaches only a short walk away.

Nearby natural attractions include:

- Sea Acres Rainforest Boardwalk
- Tacking Point Lighthouse
- Port Macquarie Coastal Walk
- Bago Maze & Vineyards

- Billabong Zoo
- North Brother Mountain (Laurieton Lookout)

Tourism info:

www.discoverportmacquarie.com.au

www.portmacquarieinfo.com.au

www.visitnsw.com/port-macquarie-area

What to Expect When You Arrive

Port Macquarie's weather can vary, warm summers, mild winters, and sudden changes, so pack clothing for both warm and cool conditions.



Typical Weather

Summer (Dec–Feb)	Warm to hot, 25–32°C, humid, great beach weather
Autumn (Mar–May)	Mild, sunny, 18–25°C
Winter (Jun–Aug)	Mild, 8–20°C, cool nights
Spring (Sep–Nov)	Warm, 20–28°C, ideal outdoor conditions



Rain can occur year-round, especially in summer storms.

Before travelling, check the Australian Border Force rules to ensure the items you bring are allowed.

www.abf.gov.au/entering-and-leaving-australia/can-you-bring-it-in

Staying Safe in Australia

Australia is a beautiful country, but it's also home to unique environments and wildlife. Staying informed helps you enjoy your time safely.



In the Water

Port Macquarie has some of the best beaches in NSW.

Popular patrolled beaches include:

- Town Beach
- Flynn's Beach
- Lighthouse Beach

Patrolled beaches are monitored by professional lifeguards or volunteer surf lifesavers who set up red and yellow flags to mark the safest swimming zones. The lifeguards ensure people are supervised and can get help quickly if they get into trouble in the water. Patrols operate mainly on weekends and holidays.

A rip is a strong channel of water moving away from the shore. These currents can be dangerous, pulling swimmers away from the shoreline at high speeds. Signs of a rip include a darker or calmer area of water, fewer breaking waves, and a line of foam or debris moving seaward.

If you are caught in a rip:

1. Stay calm
2. Do NOT swim against the current
3. Swim parallel to the beach to escape
4. Signal for help to a lifeguard by raising your arm

In the Bush

Port Macquarie is surrounded by rainforests, waterfalls, and national parks (including Sea Acres, Burrawan, and coastal walking tracks).

If you go exploring:

- Take water
- Wear proper shoes & long pants
- Do not go alone
- Tell someone where you are going



- Stick to clear, open paths
- Avoid long grass when possible

Snakes & wildlife

In Australia, **snakes in the bush** are a very real part of the landscape. Here's what you should know if you're spending time in the bush, on trails, or in rural areas.

Snakes commonly shelter in:

- Long grass
- Rock piles
- Fallen logs
- Leaf litter
- Near water sources
- Under debris or corrugated iron



They are most active in warm weather - spring and summer.

Safety Tips

- Make noise while walking; snakes prefer to avoid humans.
- Never place hands/feet where you can't see (e.g., holes, logs).
- If you see a snake: **Stop, back away slowly, give it space.**
- Do *not* try to kill, move, or provoke the snake.

The animals you see in the bush and along walking tracks are best admired from a distance. Most will avoid you if you give them space, but trying to touch, feed, or approach them can stress the animal and put you at risk.

So, enjoy the encounters, take photos, and let the animals get on with their day. Look, don't touch, Australia is safest and most beautiful when its wildlife is left alone.

In the Sun

Australia has high UV levels. Even cloudy days can cause sunburn.

To avoid sunburn:

- Wear sun-protective clothing
- Use SPF30+ sunscreen
- Wear a hat
- Use sunglasses
- Seek shade

Fishing in NSW

Port Macquarie is a popular fishing destination. If you plan to fish, you must have a NSW Recreational Fishing Licence. Bag limits and size limits apply.



More info: dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/recreational

Essential Location Information

Hospitals & Medical Care

International students must maintain Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the duration of their stay in Australia. OSHC assists with medical and hospital costs.

Port Macquarie health care services include:

- Port Macquarie Base Hospital – The main public hospital in the area, offering emergency and general medical services.
- Port Macquarie Private Hospital – Provides additional specialist and surgical care.
- GP Clinics & After-Hours Services – A wide range of general practitioners and urgent care options are available locally if you need non-emergency medical attention.
- Pharmacies – Can help with minor illnesses, provide advice on medicines, and recommend over-the-counter treatments.



In an Emergency

Dial **000** for **Police, Fire, or Ambulance**.

Types of Accommodation

- Private Rentals: Units, houses, or shared houses leased through agents or owners.
- Flatmate Arrangements: Renting a room in an established share house.
- Student Share Accommodation: Housing specifically set up for students.

Note: Utilities such as electricity, gas, and internet may be included in the rent, or you may need to pay them separately. Always check before signing.

Finding Accommodation

Popular websites for searching:

- www.flatmates.com.au – Find share houses and rooms.
- www.realestate.com.au – Private rentals and units.
- www.rent.com.au – Rentals and share house options.

When choosing a place, consider:

- Travel time to campus
- Nearby bus routes and transport options

Student Accommodation



We offer shared accommodation with other students, depending on availability. This housing is not included in tuition fees and must be arranged separately. If you are interested, please contact us and we will advise you of current options and vacancies.

Renting & Tenant Rights in NSW

Renters in New South Wales are protected by law. Key things to know:

- A bond is usually required (typically 4 weeks' rent).
- You must be given a written rental agreement.
- Repairs should be completed within a reasonable time.
- Landlords and agents must give proper notice before inspections or visits.

For full details, see NSW Fair Trading's tenant information:

www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

Cost of Living – Port Macquarie (Approx.)

Item	Typical Cost
Share house room	\$180–\$280 per week
Groceries	\$80–\$120 per week
Mobile phone plan	\$20–\$40 per month
Public transport	\$20–\$40 per week
Eating out	\$15–\$25 per meal

Money & Banking

Opening a Bank Account

Most major banks allow international students to open an account with a passport, visa, and an Australian address. Banks include CBA, ANZ, Westpac, NAB.

Using ATMs & Cards

Visa/Mastercard debit cards are accepted everywhere. ATMs are widely available.



Managing Money

Australia uses the Australian Dollar (AUD). Note: 1c and 2c coins no longer exist and cash purchases are rounded to the nearest 5c. Note that the size of our coins is no indication of value. Our largest coin is the 50c piece, and the \$2 coin is smaller than the \$1 coin. Australia no longer uses 1 and 2-cent coins.

Bargaining



Australians generally do not bargain for their goods or services. In most cases, it is normal to pay the price labelled on the item. However, for more expensive items such as cars, large televisions, and white goods, you may be able to put your negotiation skills to the test. It is advisable to shop around for the best price, though. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact someone at one of the campuses for assistance.

Money Exchange

You will be able to exchange your international currency at the airport when you arrive or otherwise at the various local banks. Also, consider that you will have to pay fees. Banks usually do not give very good exchange rates.

It may be better for you to buy some AUD in your home country before coming to Australia to get you started. The ability to transfer money from overseas to your Australian Bank (if you decide to open an account) through exchanges like [Western Union](#) or [XE money transfer](#). XE money transfer offers free transactions with competitive exchange rates. Visa, MasterCard, and American Express facilities are widely available.

Working in Australia

Visa Work Conditions

Student visa holders may generally work up to 20 hours per week during study periods and unlimited hours during scheduled course breaks.

Students are responsible for ensuring they understand and comply with their individual visa conditions at all times. Visa conditions may change, so students should regularly check official sources.

Further information is available at:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/>

Taxation and Tax File Number (TFN)

To work legally in Australia, you must have a Tax File Number (TFN).

A TFN can be applied for online through the Australian Taxation Office (ATO):

<https://www.ato.gov.au/>

Finding Student-Friendly Employment

International students commonly find part-time work in the following industries:



- Retail
- Hospitality (cafés, restaurants, fast food)
- Tourism
- Supermarkets
- Cleaning services
- Customer service roles

Useful job search resources include:

- <https://www.seek.com.au>
- <https://www.indeed.com.au/>
- Local Facebook community groups
- Approaching local businesses directly



Workplace Rights

All workers in Australia, including international students, are entitled to:

- The minimum wage
- Safe and healthy working conditions
- Appropriate breaks
- Payslips
- Fair and respectful treatment in the workplace

Information about workplace rights for international students is available from the Fair Work Ombudsman:

<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/international-students>

Transport & Getting Around

Port Macquarie is serviced by:

- **Busways** – local bus network
- **Route 341** – stops at Port Macquarie Airport
- **Ride-share services** (Uber)
- **Taxi services**
- **Bike paths and walkways**



AIAC buses service most areas within Port Macquarie. There is a set timetable for picking up and returning in place from the AIAC Airport campus. The timetable might vary and upon your arrival at the college we will update you with the latest timetable information as soon as possible. If the AIAC bus timetable does not suit your flying schedule as set out by your instructor, the instructor will look after your transport needs. Our buses are fully insured, and our company has public liability insurance to cover any incidents.

Public Transport



There is also a train station located at Wauchope with a bus service running to Port Macquarie. The Train line is on the Brisbane to Sydney line and takes around 7 hours to go from Wauchope to Sydney.

It is a legal requirement in Australia that all passengers in a vehicle to wear a seatbelt. It is also illegal to use or even touch a mobile device whilst driving or stopped at traffic lights, pedestrian crossings etc. Heavy fines apply for breaching NSW road laws. When travelling in AIAC buses/vehicles, please remember to use your seatbelt.

Shopping & Groceries

Australia offers a wide range of shopping options for food and everyday essentials. Students will find both large supermarkets and local shopping centres conveniently located in Port Macquarie.

Major supermarkets:

- Woolworths
- Aldi
- Coles

Local shopping centres:

- Port Central
- Settlement City
- Lake Innes Village

Weekend markets offering:

- Fresh produce
- Ready-to-eat food
- Handmade goods



Students are expected to follow all Australian laws while living and studying in Australia.

Alcohol & Tobacco

- Legal drinking age: 18 years and over
- Photo ID is required
- Restrictions apply in public areas
- Smoking is prohibited in many locations

Mobile Phones, Internet & Electrical Items

Students should be aware of Australia's electrical standards and mobile phone options to ensure a smooth transition when arriving in Australia.



- Australia uses **240 volts**
- Overseas electrical items must meet Australian safety standards
- Power adaptors may be required



Students are encouraged to bring a laptop or tablet to support their studies.

Popular mobile phone providers include:

- Telstra
- Optus
- Vodafone
- Amaysim
- Boost

Prepaid mobile phone plans are widely available and affordable.

Libraries & Study Resources

Public libraries provide free access to learning materials and online resources and are a valuable support for students studying in Australia.

The Port Macquarie Library can provide services such as:

- Borrowing books, CDs and DVDs
- Computer and internet access
- Printing, copying and scanning facilities
- 3D printing
- Justice of the Peace
- Language-learning tools
- eBooks and research resources

To register, students will need:

- Passport or valid identification
- Proof of Australian address

This can be supplied by AIAC if required.

For more information:

<http://mnclibrary.org.au/>

Social Norms

Social norms describe the expected behaviours in everyday life, study, and work in Australia. Following these norms helps students integrate smoothly into the community.

Everyday Behaviour:



- Queue (line up) and wait your turn
- Be punctual for appointments, classes, and meetings
- Respect personal space and boundaries
- Greet people with a smile or simple “Hello”
- Say “please” and “thank you”



Workplace & Study Etiquette:

- Teamwork and collaboration are valued
- Asking questions is encouraged
- Constructive feedback is common and appreciated

Social Activities:

- Casual invitations for coffee or meals are common
- Avoid controversial topics like politics or religion with new acquaintances

Australian slang

Australian humour can sometimes seem direct or sarcastic, but it is usually friendly. Locals generally speak quickly and use slang. Below are some common slang phrases.

Ace! – excellent!

Ankle biter – small child

Arvo – afternoon

Aussie – Australian

Barbie or BBQ – barbecue

Big smoke – a big city, especially Sydney or Melbourne

Bikkie – biscuit

Bloke – man, guy

Bludger – lazy person

Bugged – tired

BYO – Bring Your Own: often wine at a restaurant or food to an event

Cozzie – swimming costume

Cranky – in a bad mood, angry

Crook – sick

Dinkum, fair dinkum – true, real, genuine

Dodgy – not quite right, suspicious

Down Under – Australia and New Zealand

Dunny – outside toilet

Esky – insulated food/drink container for picnics, barbecues, etc.

Fair go – a chance

Fella – man

Footy – Australian Rules football (AFL)

G'Day – hello!



Good onya – good for you, well done
Have a gander – have a look at something
Heaps – a lot
Jug – electric kettle
Knackered – exhausted
Knock back – refusal
Lollies – sweets, candy
Maccas - McDonalds
Mozzie – mosquito
No worries or no drama! – expression of forgiveness or reassurance
Outback – the remote and less populated inland districts of Australia
Oz – Australia
Postie – postman, mailman
Reckon – to agree, an opinion
Rock up – to turn up
Roo – kangaroo
She'll be right – it'll turn out okay
Shout – ie your shout, your turn to buy, a round of drinks usually
Sickie – day off sick
Sprung – caught doing something wrong
Sucked in – to be coned or tricked
Sunnies – sunglasses
Tea – supper or dinner
Ta – thank you
Thongs – cheap rubber backless sandals
Too right! – definitely!
Tucker – food
Ugg boots – Australian sheepskin boots
Uni – university
Veggies – vegetables
Walkabout (it's gone walkabout) – it's lost, can't be found
Whinge – complain
Wuss – a coward