

**STUDY  
CAIRNS**

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# A GUIDE TO STUDYING & LIVING IN CAIRNS



**A GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

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# WELCOME TO CAIRNS

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Congratulations on choosing Cairns as your study destination. When you arrive, you will join students from over 60 countries already taking advantage of Australia's world-class education system.

In Cairns you will have a unique kind of education experience encountering a learning style that encourages innovative, creative and independent thinking. You will build valuable skills to give you academic, personal and professional advantages.

This guide has been prepared to help you transition to student life in Cairns. It provides practical information about moving to and living in Cairns. For further information visit [www.studycairns.com.au](http://www.studycairns.com.au)

We wish you every success with your studies and hope you enjoy your time in Cairns - it will be a life changing experience!





# BEFORE YOU LEAVE

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If you are considering Cairns as a possible choice to further your study overseas there will be many things to plan and prepare for. We hope this guide helps you to plan your trip and prepare you for the many wonderful and exciting opportunities ahead of you.

If you haven't yet chosen your Cairns education provider - you will find a list of quality education institutions endorsed by Study Cairns including University, Vocational Training, English Language, Primary and High Schools at [www.studycairns.com.au/study/](http://www.studycairns.com.au/study/)

A few weeks before you leave you should contact the International Student Advisor at your educational institution. They can assist and advise you on airport arrival details, temporary accommodation, orientation sessions and other services.

Take copies of all documentation with you, including your passport, visa, travellers' cheque receipts, flight tickets, insurance documents and credit cards. As well as a hard copy of your travel documents, take a digital copy that you can access on your mobile and store in an online server, for example, Dropbox. Pack copies safely in your luggage where they can be located in an emergency, and keep originals in your hand luggage. Also leave a copy of all your important documents with someone at home.

There are important things you should know before applying for, or being granted, an Australian visa.

This includes:

- applying for the right type of visa
- application requirements
- your obligations while in Australia
- the importance of complying with visa conditions.

Please ensure you arrange your student visa with an Australian registered migration agent or institution prior to leaving home. Reputable migration agents working with Study Cairns are listed at [www.studycairns.com.au/work/migration-and-visas/](http://www.studycairns.com.au/work/migration-and-visas/)

Visit the Department of Home Affairs website for further information:  
[www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Trav](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Trav)

## PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Print the 'Before You Leave' checklist on the last page of this brochure to ensure important documents are prepared for your trip.

## PACKING

When packing your luggage, keep the items you might need to declare at customs easily accessible. Keep in mind the check-in weight for your luggage allowance on your ticket. Clearly label your luggage with your name, contact address and the address of your institution. It is recommended to lock your luggage, however if a search of your luggage is necessary due to security issues the lock may be broken.

## NEVER AGREE TO BRING A BAG OR OTHER ITEMS TO AUSTRALIA FOR SOMEONE ELSE AS IT MAY CONTAIN SOMETHING ILLEGAL AND YOU WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR IT.

Keep your passport and the Notice of Arrival or Confirmation of Enrolment from your institution with you at all times, along with the contact details of the International Office of your institution. If you are unsure of what to do at the airport, ask an official for help.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

Make sure you have enough cover for yourself and your possessions, especially while travelling. Check that your policy covers you if you intend to work overseas. To compare travel insurance offered in Australia visit:

- [www.comparetraveliansurance.com.au](http://www.comparetraveliansurance.com.au)
- [www.travelinsurancequotes.com.au](http://www.travelinsurancequotes.com.au)
- [www.covermore.com.au/compare-travel-insurance](http://www.covermore.com.au/compare-travel-insurance)
- [www.travelinsurancedirect.com.au/easy-guide-to-travelinsurance/compare-travel-insurance](http://www.travelinsurancedirect.com.au/easy-guide-to-travelinsurance/compare-travel-insurance)

## CAR INSURANCE

Collect a 'no claim' letter from your insurance company before you leave your home country if you intend to buy a car. Car insurance is expensive in Australia, particularly for young people. Most 'no claim' bonuses are transferable to Australian insurance companies. This letter will ensure that you get 'no claim' benefits.

## MONEY (PLANNING YOUR FINANCES)

Make sure you bring enough Australian currency in cash for your first few days and have access to between \$1500 and \$3500 via a debit card/cash card or in bank drafts/travellers cheques to help you settle.

## REFERENCES FOR LONG TERM ACCOMMODATION

If you plan to rent long term accommodation, it is recommended that you bring references from your previous landlords. This will make signing a tenancy agreement a lot easier. Make sure that you have some current bank records to help prove that you can afford paying the rent.





### HEALTH RECORDS

Bring your medical records and medical prescriptions with a letter from your doctor if you need to take medication. If records are in another language, a translated copy to English is recommended.

### ARRIVING IN CAIRNS

There are certain items which need to be declared in the first airport of arrival in Australia, whether you are directly arriving at Cairns International Airport or connecting to Cairns through another Australian city.

### IMMIGRATION

Have your passport and Incoming Passenger card ready to go through Immigration. You will proceed to the baggage examination area after collecting your luggage from the baggage hall.

### CUSTOMS & QUARANTINE

To help protect Australia's agricultural industries and unique environment, Customs Officers screen all incoming air and sea passengers, baggage, mail and cargo using x-ray machines, detector dogs, physical inspection, questioning and profiling.

You must declare all food, plant material and animal products when you arrive in Australia. You make this declaration on your Incoming Passenger Card, which is handed to you by the airline before you land. You must complete this card truthfully - it is a legal document. Declared items are inspected to ensure they don't bring any pests or diseases into Australia.

If you have items you don't wish to declare, you can dispose of them in quarantine bins in the airport terminal. Some products may require treatment (at a cost) such as fumigation or gamma irradiation to make them safe. Items that cannot be treated will be seized and destroyed by quarantine.

All luggage is x-rayed or screened. If you fail to declare or dispose of any quarantine items, or make a false declaration:

- You will be caught;
- You could be fined on-the-spot; or
- You could be prosecuted, fined and risk jail time.

**Note:** the information provided above regarding prohibited and restricted goods is a guide only. We recommend that you seek more detailed information to ensure that you comply with legislative requirements before arrival in Australia. For more information visit: [www.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au)

### **DUTY FREE GOODS**

Duty Free concessions in Australia are different to those in other countries. Most personal items such as new clothing, footwear and articles for personal hygiene and grooming (excluding fur and perfume concentrates) may be brought into Australia in your baggage, free from duty and tax. For other goods, limits apply. Be aware that if you exceed Australia's Duty Free concession items you will be charged duty and tax on all items of that type, not just the items which exceed the limits. For a full list of Duty Free concessions visit: [www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/ente/duty-free-concessions](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/ente/duty-free-concessions)

### **LEAVING THE AIRPORT**

Many institutions provide airport arrival services for students who will be living on campus or in homestay. Contact your education institution or accommodation provider a few weeks before your leave home to make these arrangements. Make sure you put the name and phone number of your reception officer and the place and time you have arranged to meet in your hand luggage so you can find it quickly.

### **TRANSPORT FROM THE AIRPORT**

Public transport runs from and to the domestic and international airports. Buses, taxis and Uber are available at both terminals.

### **CONTACT HOME**

Once you arrive at your accommodation make sure you contact your parents or relatives and let them know that you have arrived safely.

### **ON ARRIVAL CHECKLIST**

- Contact the International Office at your institution
- Obtain a student card and concession cards
- Enroll in the orientation session provided by your institution
- Open a bank account, if you have not already done that
- Arrange accommodation if not already booked. Booking prior to arrival is highly recommended (see page 9)
- Visit the Cairns Student Hub (see page 8)

### **ATTEND YOUR INSTITUTION'S ARRIVAL SESSIONS**

It is important to attend Welcome Sessions organised by your institution. For some institutions the Welcome Sessions are compulsory for all new international students. It provides useful information to assist with your settlement in Cairns and your institution.





# SETTLING IN CAIRNS

Explore Cairns and identify places such as your institution, shopping centres, and public transport points close to your main places of your living, studying and shopping. The local paper can provide you with ideas on the community, sporting and cultural clubs in your area. Joining clubs is a great way to meet new friends and become part of the community. Information on community events, concerts and markets can be found in the newspaper. The website [www.gumtree.com.au](http://www.gumtree.com.au) is a great source of general information on buying cars, finding accommodation, jobs and events.

## CAIRNS STUDENT HUB

To make settling into Cairns easier the Cairns Student Hub, located in the Cairns CBD, offers a wide range of support services for international students. These include orientation to Cairns, accommodation advice, cultural and religious support, individual assistance relating to mental health and wellbeing, employment advice, English language support and importantly, many opportunities to meet other students.

The Student Hub's Facebook page is updated regularly with event notices and news from the Hub. We highly encourage you to utilise the Student Hub to meet new friends and to enhance your experience in Cairns.

For more information on the Cairns Student Hub and the services provided, visit in person or online:

**Address:** Shop 2 / 93-105 Lake Street, Cairns City

**Web:** [www.cairnsstudenthub.com.au](http://www.cairnsstudenthub.com.au)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/cairnsstudenthub](http://www.facebook.com/cairnsstudenthub)

**Email:** [admin@studycairns.com.au](mailto:admin@studycairns.com.au)



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# ACCOMMODATION

## FINDING ACCOMMODATION

There is a variety of accommodation types available to suit different budgets and needs, including on-campus accommodation, homestay with an Australian family or shared living in a house or apartment. Temporary accommodation can be arranged for you before you leave home so that when you arrive you have some time to consider your long-term options.

A list of reputable accommodation options endorsed by Study Cairns is available at [www.studycairns.com.au/live/student-accommodation/](http://www.studycairns.com.au/live/student-accommodation/)

Alternative accommodation information sources include:

- The international office at your education institution
- Your Education Agent
- The Cairns Student Hub
- Internet
- Noticeboards around the city
- Word-of-mouth - where other students are staying
- The Cairns Post classifieds section

## HOMESTAY

Homestay is your 'home away from home'. Living with an Australian family is one of the most convenient, safe and rewarding experiences whilst visiting Australia. It's an invaluable opportunity to experience the genuine Australian culture and lifestyle as well as make new friends and practice your English language skills. Homestay costs between \$235-\$350 a week including meals and is popular with younger students and those studying short-term English courses.

Educational institutions and homestay coordinators maintain a register of reputable families prepared to board international students and try to match each student with a suitable family who may have similar interests. Single or shared rooms are available and the costs vary accordingly. You are not required to pay a bond but usually the first four weeks will be paid up front along with a placement fee to the school/company for making the arrangements.





Regardless of your age, homestay is a good option when initially moving to Australia as it enables you to get to know the area, gives you time to find a suitable place and potentially friends you can share with, and secures an Australian family you can call on in times of need later.

### SHARE HOUSE ACCOMMODATION

Share house accommodation provides students with a furnished private room to rent whilst sharing communal areas with other housemates. Share houses are generally located within an easy walk of downtown Cairns, and within 10-20 minutes of all major schools and attractions.

Rooms are fully-furnished and available as single or double/twin share if travelling with a friend or partner. Each room is lockable and includes internet, linen-pack, a study desk and utilities. Share houses are self-contained including laundry facilities, students do not need to supply anything.

- Private room, shared bathroom, shared living – from \$180 per week
- Shared room, shared bathroom, shared living - from \$135 per week

### PURPOSE-BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) is accommodation specifically built with the needs of students in mind.

PBSA includes the cost of utilities, air-conditioning, internet, secure onsite parking for cars / bicycles and social benefits such as community, pastoral care, onsite staff and dedicated security. PBSA provides fully-furnished apartments with full laundry facilities and BBQ areas.

Cairns has two styles of purpose-built student accommodation:

- > With all meals, 7 days/week
- > Without meals
- Private room, shared bathroom, shared living – from \$185 per week
- Private room, shared bathroom, shared living, plus all meals - from \$199 per week
- Private room, private ensuite, shared living – from \$250 per week

## HOSTEL AND GUEST HOUSES

Hostels provide budget-oriented, sociable accommodation where students can rent a bed in a dormitory and share a bathroom, lounge and kitchen. Rooms can be mixed or single-sex. Private rooms with ensuite may also be available. Students share kitchen and bathroom facilities. All accommodation options require a security deposit to be paid upon check-in - this is refunded on departure if the room is returned in the same condition as on entry.

## RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

Students sometimes rent a house or apartment with other students. When renting a house, apartment or bed-sit, the landlord (the owner of the property) will require rent to be paid in advance together with a security bond equal to four weeks rent. Make sure you get receipts of these payments. This bond is refundable at the end of the lease, provided that no damage has been done to the property and appropriate notice has been given to the landlord to vacate the premises.

If you intend to rent, check prices with your education institution's international office, noticeboard or website; real estate agents and local newspapers. Take

into consideration the cost of utilities such as electricity and gas (see below).

Real estate websites include:

- [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au)
- [www.domain.com.au](http://www.domain.com.au)

## GETTING CONNECTED - UTILITIES

If you intend to rent a house or apartment you will generally be responsible for connecting service utilities yourself. The websites of the major utility companies for electricity and gas connections are as follows:

- Ergon Energy      [www.ergon.com.au](http://www.ergon.com.au)
- Elgas                [www.elgas.com.au](http://www.elgas.com.au)

Like other businesses, rates and discounts vary between the companies and it is wise to compare the services being offered. Before entering into a contract use these online tools to compare prices: [www.goswitch.com.au](http://www.goswitch.com.au)





# GETTING AROUND

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Once you have arrived in Cairns, getting around consists of a combination of public and private transport depending on how long you intend to stay.

From Cairns International/Domestic Airport, visitors can choose to take a bus, taxi/cab or Uber. Accommodation providers may also provide transport from the airport. It is only about 10-15 minutes from the airport to the city centre.

## USEFUL NUMBERS

- **Cairns Taxis (city taxi)**  
[www.cairnstaxis.com.au](http://www.cairnstaxis.com.au)  
131 008 (+617 4048 8308)
- **Uber (city & surrounds)**  
[www.uber.com](http://www.uber.com) (download the App on your mobile device)
- **Sunbus (city bus)**  
[www.sunbus.com.au](http://www.sunbus.com.au)  
4057 7411 (+617 4057 7411)
- **Sun Palm Transport Group (Cairns to Port Douglas/Daintree)**  
[www.sunpalmtransport.com.au](http://www.sunpalmtransport.com.au)  
4099 1191 (+617 4099 1191)
- **Trans North Bus & Coach (Cairns to Tablelands)**  
[www.transnorthbus.com](http://www.transnorthbus.com)  
4095 8644 (+617 4095 8644)
- **Greyhound Australia (interstate)**  
[www.greyhound.com.au](http://www.greyhound.com.au)  
1300 473 946 (+617 4690 9850)
- **Premier Motor Service (interstate)**  
[www.premierms.com.au](http://www.premierms.com.au)  
133 410 (+612 4423 5233)
- **Queensland Rail (trains)**  
[www.queenslandrail.com.au](http://www.queenslandrail.com.au)  
4036 9249 (+617 4036 9249)

## ROAD CONDITIONS

RACQ road condition reports (recorded) 1300 130 595.

## LOCAL BUSES

Cairns is serviced by a wide reaching network of buses, which is owned and operated by Sunbus. It is important to note that buses in Cairns need to be hailed down either from a 'hail and ride', a bus shelter or from a bus station.

Sunbus travels around the city of Cairns and to all suburbs including the northern beaches and Palm Cove. There are also public buses to the smaller towns including Kuranda and Port Douglas, the Atherton Tablelands, Mission Beach and Cooktown.

All information about these zones, timetables, services, ticketing and fares can be found at:

- [www.sunbus.com.au](http://www.sunbus.com.au)
- [www.tmr.qld.gov.au](http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au)

Tickets can be bought for a single journey or on a daily or weekly basis. Buses in Cairns only accept coins and notes in small denominations.

A 50% concession on Connect tickets on bus services throughout Queensland is provided to full-time tertiary students attending Queensland registered training organisations. Your education provider can help you obtain a valid concession card. Please note these concession tickets may not be available for English Language students.

## CYCLING & WALKING

Cairns is a relatively flat city and many visitors enjoy hiring bicycles for the duration of their visit to get around the city and to nearby attractions like the Cairns Botanic Gardens, the Esplanade, Cairns Marina waterfront boardwalk and shopping centres.

Bicycle rental/purchase is available through some accommodation providers and institutions. Alternatively they can be bought second-hand via Facebook Marketplace, The Cairns Post or [www.gumtree.com.au](http://www.gumtree.com.au). When meeting a person who's selling an item - always tell a friend/peer when and where you're going, and when you expect to return. Don't travel alone at night and always stay in well-lit areas.

A Cairns walking and cycling circuit has been developed to provide enjoyable recreation activities within central Cairns through off-road walking and cycling paths. It is a legal requirement to wear a helmet when riding a bike. You will be fined if you do not wear a helmet.



It is also highly recommended to use lights and wear high-visibility clothing when riding, especially at night time. It is important to always lock your bike when not in use.

For more information on cycling in Cairns visit:

- [www.cairns.qld.gov.au/facilities-sport-leisure/parks/cycle](http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/facilities-sport-leisure/parks/cycle)

## TAXIS

Taxis can be hired by hailing, on city ranks or by phoning Cairns Taxis on 131 008. Taxis are relatively expensive for long journeys outside of Cairns city centre, but reasonable for short jaunts in the city itself. The major taxi rank is located on Lake Street in the centre of Cairns (near the Cairns Student Hub). Taxis can also be picked up from most hotels or called to order on 131 008. Taxis tend not to pick people up in the street unless dropping off another passenger.

## UBER

Uber is a transportation company that allows you to reserve a personal driver in any of the worldwide cities that Uber operates in. Visit [uber.com](http://uber.com) or download the Uber app from your mobile device. Click the Sign Up link underneath 'Ride with Uber'. You'll need an email address and credit card/PayPal to create an account to use the Uber service.

## DRIVING IN CAIRNS

If you're planning on driving whilst in Australia, it is recommended you get an International Driver's Licence before you leave home as you cannot apply for it once you've arrived. It's also important to note that insurance for drivers under 25 years of age is very expensive in Australia - you may need to allow for this in your planning.

## CAR HIRE

Many visitors choose to hire a car or 4WD vehicle, particularly if they plan to stay for an extended period and/or visit other towns in the region. There are a number of international car hire companies in the city as well as cheaper options with older cars available. If you have an International Driver's Licence, it will be much easier to hire a car.

## BUYING A CAR

A popular choice is to hire or buy a van, which has been converted into a mini caravan, and use it as a base of operations, camping and travelling around the area. Vehicles are often advertised for sale in The Cairns Post, noticeboards at backpacker accommodations or on [www.gumtree.com.au](http://www.gumtree.com.au)

## TOUR BUSES

It is not necessary for visitors to hire a car as most towns, tours and attractions can be reached via tour operators. These tours will pick visitors up from their accommodation and return them at the end of the tour.

## INTERSTATE PUBLIC BUSES

Visitors can travel to other states in Australia via 'coaches' leaving from a central depot at the Reef Fleet Terminal on the Cairns Esplanade.

## TRAINS

Trains are another way to travel into the region from other states, however there is no light rail in the Cairns region apart from the tourist attraction of the Kuranda Scenic Railway. Queensland Rail operates from the Cairns Central Railway Station at the rear of Cairns Central Shopping Centre.

## FOOD AND SHOPPING

Cairns' diverse culture has facilitated the availability of ingredients from different cultures. For cooking at home, you will find a mixture of international ingredients at major supermarkets, and speciality food stores.

There is also a wide range of foods available for people with special diets, such as gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian, vegan and halal.

## EATING OUT

In Cairns you will find a huge array of mouth-watering and tempting foods. Flavours from all over the world are at your fingertips or choose from innovative Australian Cuisines such as emu, crocodile and kangaroo.

All budgets are catered for with dining and there are plenty of local restaurants offering the freshest in local produce for great prices.

## NIGHTLIFE

Cairns has a vibrant entertainment precinct with markets, movies, open air lagoon, shopping centres and a range of restaurants, bars and clubs to explore. Cairns nightlife offers something for everyone from chilled-out beers overlooking the marina and laneway whisky bars, to iconic pubs with tropical beer gardens and stylish underground bars with live music. Photo ID is required for entry to restaurants, clubs, bars and pubs that serve alcohol after midnight. Usually your photo ID is scanned at entry to the venue, from 10pm onwards. When partying ensure you stay with your friends, look after each other, and never walk home alone at night.

# MONEY

## CHANGING MONEY

Australia's currency is the Australian dollar that comes in plastic notes and metallic coins. Notes come in the denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 dollars and coins in 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents and 1 and 2 dollar coins.

Use a currency converter to convert your country's currency into Australian currency: [www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter). Visitors can choose different methods of exchanging and using money while visiting Cairns.

It is recommended before arriving in Australia that you change over a small amount of money before entering the country.

There are lots of places where you can exchange money, with foreign exchange companies found all over Cairns. These include numerous locations along the Esplanade, the Pier, shopping centres and near most major tourist destinations.

## CASH CARDS / DEBIT CARDS / CREDIT CARDS

Visa and Mastercard credit cards are accepted Australia-wide, and some businesses also accept American Express cards. ATM's are located all over Cairns and are easy to locate.

If you decide that you would like to use your cash, debit or credit cards to purchase or withdraw money from Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) in Australia, make sure that you inform your bank before travelling overseas - the last thing you want when overseas is your bank to freeze or cancel your cards!

Useful links:

[www.cairnswb.com.au/cairns\\_general\\_information](http://www.cairnswb.com.au/cairns_general_information)

## BANKING & INSURANCE

Opening a bank account or credit union account is one of the first things you should do after arriving in Australia.

- Be sure to enquire about student accounts as they generally attract lower fees than other accounts.
- Be sure to update your banking details each year or it may revert to normal account and fees can be charged.

- Provide your Tax File Number (TFN) to the bank or credit union when you obtain it (information on TFN page 28).

Obtain a bank card linked to your account so that you can withdraw funds from Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs).

## WECHAT PAY & ALIPAY

Some local businesses have WeChat Pay and Alipay as payment gateways for students from Asian countries.



# COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Most international students have mobile broadband for internet and mobile phone connection. SIM cards are very cheap and easy to purchase at the airport, shops and accommodation providers and a variety of plans are available. Ask the Student Hub, your education institution or accommodation provider for advice. In addition, more than 100 free community wi-fi access points are available at Telstra Air public payphones in popular Cairns locations. [www.cairns.qld.gov.au/region/wifi](http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/region/wifi)





# HEALTH & WELLBEING

## STAYING HEALTHY

Staying healthy is more than just being physically fit. It involves leading a balanced lifestyle that makes you happy. A big part of staying healthy involves eating healthy foods and exercising for both fitness and relaxation.

Cairns Regional Council provides a diverse range of free sport and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors in Cairns:

- [www.cairns.qld.gov.au/facilities-sport-leisure](http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/facilities-sport-leisure)

Your educational institution may also offer sport and recreation facilities.

## MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

High quality medical and health services are available throughout Cairns. When visiting a doctor in Cairns you will need to have your Overseas Student Health Cover card and passport with you.

If you are on medication and wish to join a scuba diving trip, you are required by law to get a Queensland Medical Certificate prior to your trip. Please contact/visit Cairns 24 Hour Medical Centre, Corner Florence & Grafton Streets, Cairns (tel 07 4052 1119) to arrange.

If you are attending a university, it may have a medical centre on campus. If not, your university, school or college may be able to recommend a suitable local doctor for an appointment.

### Other important related support services are:

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| • Domestic and Family Violence          | 1800 811 811 |
| • Sexual Assault Helpline               | 1800 010 120 |
| • Sexual Health Services                | 07 4226 4769 |
| • Gambling Helpline                     | 1800 858 858 |
| • Lifeline (Counselling services)       | 131 114      |
| • Alcohol and drug information services | 1800 177 833 |





## PERSONAL SAFETY

- Always tell someone when and where you are going and expect to return
- Don't travel alone at night and always stay in well-lit areas
- Do not display expensive items (eg. computers) in public
- Never leave personal belongings unattended
- Always carry either a mobile phone, change for a pay phone or a phone card
- It is always wise to take note of any security guidelines provided by your place of study
- Avoid giving your personal information to strangers.

If you feel you are being discriminated against, contact Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland: [www.adcq.qld.gov.au](http://www.adcq.qld.gov.au)

## OVERSEAS STUDENT HEALTH COVER

You should ensure you have adequate overseas health insurance before leaving home regardless of what type of visa you're travelling on.

All Student Visa holders must have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) which provides medical and hospital insurance in Australia. You must not arrive in Australia before your health insurance starts. If you are in Australia and do not have adequate health insurance, you are in breach of visa condition 8501.

Your education provider or your education/migration agent might organise your OSHC coverage for you, or you can select an approved OSHC provider yourself and pay the policy. You will need OSHC coverage for the duration of your visa. Note that your visa usually will last beyond the completion date of your course and that the entire period must be covered.

If your education provider arranges your OSHC coverage, you will need to know the name of your health insurance provider, the date that your policy starts and finishes and should be aware of the terms and conditions of your policy. If you arrange OSHC coverage yourself you will also need to know the policy number to include in the visa application.

If you are studying at more than one educational provider and both are arranging OSHC, you will have to ensure that there is no gap between policies. This means that as one policy expires the next commences immediately.

If you have a child born after your arrival in Australia, and you only have a single OSHC policy you must change that to a family policy. If family members join you after your arrival in Australia they will have to demonstrate that they have an OSHC policy for the duration of their visas.

Students travelling on a Working Holiday or Tourist Visa are encouraged to arrange Overseas Visitors Health Cover (OVHC), unless they have adequate travel insurance or are covered by reciprocal arrangements. Make sure that you are covered for all activities you are planning to undertake.

Throughout your time in Australia, you must maintain your OVHC or OSHC if it is a requirement of your visa. If you allow your coverage to lapse and you then need medical assistance, you'll be responsible for the full cost of all the hospital and medical treatment for both yourself and any dependents. This can be extremely expensive. Similarly, if you allow your OVHC or OSHC to lapse you could face the situation where your visa is found to be no longer compliant and is cancelled.

There are many different insurance products available. Make sure you select a policy that meets your requirements.

### **SEXUAL HEALTH**

Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Viral Hepatitis are significant public health issues for Queenslanders.

To learn how to reduce your risk of catching STIs and blood borne viruses (BBVs):

- Have a sexual health check
- Practice safe sex
- Practice safe injecting

Visit: [www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/sexual-health](http://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/sexual-health)

To know where to get help visit:

[www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/sex-health/services](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/sex-health/services)

### **CAIRNS EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER IS 000**

It is a free call from every phone in Australia, including mobile phones.

You should call 000 if you are in a life-threatening situation and need the help of the police, fire brigade, or ambulance service. This includes if you are witnessing a crime in progress. Do not call 000 if it is not an emergency, for example if you have a cold and need to see a doctor, if you are lost and need directions, or if you are locked out of your house.

When you call 000, you will be connected to an operator who will help progress your request for help. You will need to tell them which services you need - police, fire or ambulance. It is important that you try to stay calm and give the operator clear information on what the emergency is. Answer any questions as best you





can. It is extremely important that you tell the operator where you are, and any landmarks that are nearby (a statue, bridge, street name, store, etc.).

While you are waiting for help to arrive, try to stay calm and don't do anything that will put yourself or others in danger. Generally, help will arrive very quickly and it is best to leave these situations to the people who are trained to deal with them.

### EMERGENCIES/HOSPITALS

Major public hospitals and services in Cairns are:

**Cairns Hospital:** 165 The Esplanade, Cairns / Tel: 4226 0000

**Cairns 24 Hour Medical Centre:** Corner Florence & Grafton Streets, Cairns / Tel: 4052 1119

**Cairns Day Surgery:** 156-160 Grafton Street, Cairns / Tel: 4051 5454

**Cairns Private Hospital:** 1 Upward Street, Cairns / Tel: 4052 5200

**Queensland Ambulance Services:** Tel: 131 233

13Health (Tel: 13 432 584) is a 24-hour a day telephone service which provides qualified health advice.

### BEACH AND WATER SAFETY

Every year, hundreds of swimmers are rescued on Queensland beaches.

#### ALWAYS SWIM BETWEEN THE RED AND YELLOW FLAGS

**F** Find the flags and swim between them. The red and yellow flags represent the area patrolled by lifesavers and lifeguards.

**L** Look at the safety signs. Safety signs help you identify potential dangers and daily conditions at the beach and are located at beach access points and at the flagged area. These signs also indicate the possible presence of crocodiles or marine stingers.

**A** Ask a lifesaver for some advice. Surf conditions can change quickly (water depth, currents, wave size and type). Talk to a lifesaver or lifeguard before entering the water.

**G** Get a friend to swim with you. Always swim with a friend so you can look out for each other's safety and get help if needed. Children should always be supervised by an adult.

**S** Stick your hand up for help. If you get in trouble in the water, stay calm. Raise your arm to signal for help. Float and wait for assistance. Float with a current or rip. Don't try and swim against it.



## NEVER:

- Swim at unpatrolled beaches or swim alone
- Swim at night, under the influence of alcohol or directly after a meal
- Run and dive into the water.

Further valuable information about water safety and membership of surf lifesaving clubs can be found at: [www.lifesaving.com.au](http://www.lifesaving.com.au)

## CYCLONE PREPAREDNESS

Cyclones are a common part of living in a tropical climate, and Cairns city and its residents are well-prepared.

The cyclone season in Cairns lasts from November to May and whilst cyclones can produce strong winds they rarely do more than disrupt traffic and boat movements for a few days.

There is usually several days notice, and your accommodation provider and institution will provide you with plenty of advice and support.

Tropical Cyclones are in principle the same as hurricanes, typhoons and monsoons. Basically they are a huge mass of low pressure air that forms over warm tropical water swirling in a clockwise direction. As the air mass grows, strong winds and torrential rain result.

### For more information visit:

[www.cairns.qld.gov.au/cyclone](http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/cyclone)

## MULTI-LINGUAL CYCLONE GUIDES

Council has multi-lingual cyclone guides which provide information on how to prepare for a cyclone. Guides are available in Arabic, French, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Tagalog, Hmong, PNG Pidgin, Swahili and Nepalese.

### To view copies visit:

[www.cairns.qld.gov.au/community-environment/natural-disasters/accessible-information](http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/community-environment/natural-disasters/accessible-information)

## FIRE & HOME SAFETY

Every year people die as a result of fires in the home. The majority of fires occur at night when people are asleep. Most fatal fires are preventable. Always choose registered accommodation that has smoke alarms fitted in every room. Take precautions to protect yourself and your flatmates.

Queensland Fire Safety offers a wide range of information on safety aspects at home. For more information visit: [www.qfes.qld.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx)





# LIVING IN CAIRNS

## CAIRNS RADIO, TV STATIONS AND NEWSPAPERS

To view information on radio, TV and newspapers in Cairns visit:

- [www.cairnsconnect.com/cairns/tvradio.php](http://www.cairnsconnect.com/cairns/tvradio.php)

## The Cairns Post:

- [www.cairns.com.au](http://www.cairns.com.au)
- [www.facebook.com/TheCairnsPost](https://www.facebook.com/TheCairnsPost)

## AUSTRALIAN ETIQUETTE

Australia is a multicultural society and therefore Australian customs may differ depending on the individual's background.

## ADDRESSING PEOPLE

Australians usually have a first or given names and a family name or surname. People of your own age or younger are usually addressed by their first names. When speaking to people older than you, call them Mr, Mrs or Ms followed by their surname until you know them well, or they ask you to address them by their first name.

## BARGAINING

You can't bargain in Australian shops for food items. Goods are sold according to the prices at which they are marked. However, for larger items, for example, washing machines and motor vehicles, you may be able to negotiate a cheaper price and some shops will offer discounts for payment in cash. However, in some street and weekend markets you may be able to bargain.

## BEHAVIOUR IN PUBLIC

It is against the law to be drunk, to swear, talk indecently, urinate, spit or behave in a sexually indecent way in a public place. If you need to clear your throat or nose, use a handkerchief or tissue. Spitting in public is illegal and can cause offence.

## DIRECTNESS

It is considered quite normal in Australia to discuss issues, events and ideas openly with other people. Australians might bring up in conversation issues which you may consider sensitive, embarrassing, or rude.

More about slang language visit: [www.alldownunder.com/australian-slang](http://www.alldownunder.com/australian-slang)



## **GREETINGS AND COURTESY**

Men usually shake hands (firmly) the first time they meet. Women may or may not shake hands. "How do you do", "Good morning" and "Good afternoon" are formal greetings. Usually students and young people just say "Hello" or "Hi". People often appreciate it if you add their name, eg. "Hi, Peta".

"Thank you" is a phrase used often in Australia. It is usual to say thank you even for small favours done by people who are just doing their jobs (eg. shop assistants or waiters).

## **PUNCTUALITY**

You are expected to be punctual ("on time") in Australia. If you have an appointment at 10.30am with the dentist, be there at 10.30am - no later. If you are invited for dinner at 7 o'clock, try to be there at 7.00pm or no later than 20 minutes (but not much earlier than 7.00pm). If you can't keep an appointment or if you can't avoid being late, it is best to telephone and explain. Most lectures, church services etc. begin on time.

## **SMOKING AND ALCOHOL**

If you are at someone else's home and you wish to smoke, it is common practice to go outside, as many Australians find cigarette smoking offensive. Smoking is forbidden in all University buildings, government buildings, public transport, restaurants, shops and indoor venues in Australia.

In Australia, people under the age of 18 years are not allowed to buy alcoholic drinks. There are also heavy penalties for people who drink and drive. If you are drinking in a pub/club, you should pay for each drink as soon as you receive it, and not when you are about to leave the hotel. The Australian custom of 'shouting' means that if someone buys you a drink you are expected to 'shout' them back by buying their next drink.

## **TABLE MANNERS**

Australians usually use cutlery for meals at home or in restaurants. If you don't know which utensils to use for a particular course, ask first or watch and follow what others do. You can eat with your fingers at informal meals such as a picnic or barbeque.

## **TIPPING ETIQUETTE**

Unlike some other countries, tipping in Australia is not customary. However, if you feel that the service was exceptional it's good etiquette to leave a small tip, but it will not be expected.





# MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY AND GROUPS

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## MULTICULTURAL CAIRNS

Cairns has a proud and vibrant multicultural heritage, and our diversity is one of our greatest strengths.

At the time of the 2016 census, 21.5% of the population was born overseas and 13.4% of the population spoke a language other than English at home.

For more information on Cairns' demographic information visit:

- [www.cairns.qld.gov.au/community-environment/multicultural-information](http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/community-environment/multicultural-information)

For information on multicultural information in Queensland visit:

- [www.dlgrma.qld.gov.au/multicultural-affairs/multicultural-affairs.html](http://www.dlgrma.qld.gov.au/multicultural-affairs/multicultural-affairs.html)
- [www.facebook.com/multiculturalqld](https://www.facebook.com/multiculturalqld)

## WORSHIP AND RELIGION

In Australia, people are free to follow their own beliefs and religion. Various religious organisations provide a caring and supportive environment for the sharing of life experiences and spiritual concerns.

In Cairns there are Christian Churches, Buddhist Temples, Muslim Mosques & Masjids, Sikh Gurudwaras and Jewish Synagogues.

To find places relevant to your religious affiliation visit:

- [www.cairnschurches.net.au/churches](http://www.cairnschurches.net.au/churches)
- [www.yellowpages.com.au/find/churches-temples-mosques/cairns-qld](http://www.yellowpages.com.au/find/churches-temples-mosques/cairns-qld)
- [www.yellowpages.com.au/find/organisations-church-religious/cairns-qld](http://www.yellowpages.com.au/find/organisations-church-religious/cairns-qld)



## LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS

TIS National is an interpreting service, provided by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship for people who do not speak English and for the English speakers who need to communicate with them. This service has access to over 1900 contracted interpreters across Australia, speaking more than 170 languages and dialects. TIS National is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for any person or organisation in Australia requiring interpreting services. It provides immediate telephone interpreting services, as well as pre-booked telephone and on-site interpreting.

If you need an interpreter call TIS national and the staff will connect you to the service that you need.

### PHONE 131 450

- "What language please?"
- State your preferred language to the operator.
- Wait to be connected to an interpreter.
- Tell the interpreter which office you want to call.

For more information on Translations and Interpretation services visit:  
[www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/corporate/information/fact-sheets/91tis](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/corporate/information/fact-sheets/91tis)

### CAN I GET AN INTERPRETER?

Staff of the following government services are required to provide interpreters free of charge when requested:

- **State Government Offices**  
(Community health, hospitals, schools, police services, housing, emergency, disability, courts, main roads and transport offices)
- **Federal Government Offices**  
(Immigration office, members of Parliament, Centrelink, Fair Work, Tax Office and Medicare)
- **Government funded organisations**  
(Job services, legal services, counselling and other government funded community programs)



# LEGAL INFORMATION

## AUSTRALIAN LAWS

In Queensland there are laws that protect people from discrimination, sexual harassment and several other kinds of unfair treatment. If you believe you've been treated unfairly because of your race, sex, age or any other reason, you may be able to lodge a complaint to the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission.

For more information about your rights and responsibilities, call the Commission on 1300 130 670 or you can make an appointment to talk to someone about it in the local Cairns office. You can also find out lots of information about your rights and how to make a complaint of unfair discrimination or sexual harassment by visiting the Commission website at [www.adcq.qld.gov.au](http://www.adcq.qld.gov.au)

For legal information visit: [www.legalaid.qld.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au)

## LEGAL AGE

The legal age in Australia is 18. At 18, you are legally considered an adult and able to consume and purchase alcohol and cigarettes, and Australian citizens are required to vote. The legal age of consent is 16. It is illegal to have sexual intercourse with someone under the age of 16; penalties are severe and fully enforced.

## ILLEGAL DRUGS

Use, possession and dealing of drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin and amphetamines are illegal in Australia. For international students, this may have serious implications for your enrolment and visas.

## AUSTRALIAN LEGAL SYSTEM

The Queensland Police Service is efficient, fair and will enforce the State laws completely. If you break any Australian laws, you will face the consequences.





## POLICE AND EMERGENCIES

### REPORTING A CRIME

If you need police assistance and it's not an emergency, for example for non-urgent property crime phone Police Link on 131 444 (all hours) or visit your nearest police station.

### EMERGENCY SERVICES

State Emergency Services (SES) is a volunteer organisation that assists police, fire and ambulance services in the event of severe floods, storms, bushfires etc. They also assist in emergency evacuations, search and rescue, and mass casualties. Should your home be damaged in a storm and you need assistance from SES you can call them on 132 500.

### IMPORTANT NUMBERS

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| • Ambulance, Fire and Police Emergencies  | 000          |
| • Digital mobile phone emergency services | 112          |
| • Poison Information Centre               | 131 126      |
| • Queensland Police (non-emergencies)     | 4030 7000    |
| • State Emergency Services                | 132 500      |
| • Phone Directory Assistance              | 1234         |
| • Water and Sewerage Emergencies          | 1300 692 247 |

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| • Translating and Interpreting Services      | 131 450      |
| • International Student Hotline (1800QSTUDY) | 1800 778 839 |

### TENANCY LAW

Several agencies can provide information on your legal rights as a tenant and offer advice and support:

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| • Rental Protection Agency   | <a href="http://www.rta.qld.gov.au">www.rta.qld.gov.au</a>                           |
| • Office of Fair Trading     | <a href="http://www.qld.gov.au/law/fair-trading">www.qld.gov.au/law/fair-trading</a> |
| • Real Estate Institute, Qld | <a href="http://www.reiq.com.au">www.reiq.com.au</a>                                 |
| • Tenant Union of Qld        | <a href="http://www.tenantsqld.org.au">www.tenantsqld.org.au</a>                     |

### NEED LEGAL ADVICE?

If you need help with a legal problem Legal Aid Queensland can offer you advice. Call 1300 651 188 or for information about their free services, visit

- [www.legalaid.qld.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au)

An education kit about common legal issues in Australia for Adult ESL (English as a Second language) is available at:

- [www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/Find-legal-information/Publications/Videos/Whats-the-law-Australian-law-for-new-arrivals](http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/Find-legal-information/Publications/Videos/Whats-the-law-Australian-law-for-new-arrivals)

# WORKING IN AUSTRALIA

## VISA ESSENTIALS

There are conditions on your visa you must follow:

- Maintain satisfactory attendance at classes and achieve satisfactory academic results.
- Continue to be enrolled in a registered course.
- Notify your institution of your address within seven days of arrival and within seven days of changing address.
- Notify your original provider if you change to a new provider within seven days of obtaining your new certificate of enrolment.

**IF YOU BREAK THESE CONDITIONS YOUR VISA MAY BE CANCELLED!**

For more information visit: [www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Trav/Stud](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Trav/Stud)

## WORK CONDITIONS FOR STUDENT VISA HOLDERS

If you are a student visa holder, you and your dependant family members have permission to work included with your visa. You and your family members must not breach the work conditions that apply to your student visa.

You cannot work until you have commenced your course in Australia. Once your course has commenced you are permitted to work a maximum of 40 hours per fortnight when your course is in session. To work in Australia you must have a Tax File Number (TFN) and this must be given to your employer prior to starting work.

Full details here: [www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/visa-1/500-?modal=/trav/stud/more/work-conditions-for-student-visa-holders](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/visa-1/500-?modal=/trav/stud/more/work-conditions-for-student-visa-holders)



## TAX FILE NUMBER (TFN)

To apply for a TFN, go to: [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au).  
Call 132 861 or visit an Australia Post Office.

## TAX RETURNS

Generally, if you're an overseas student enrolled at an Australian institution in a course that is more than six months long, the Australian Taxation Office regards you as an Australian resident for tax purposes. You pay tax on your earnings at the same rate as other residents.

Overseas students may need to pay tax on income they earn in Australia.  
For more information visit: [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au).

## SUPERANNUATION

Superannuation is money saved during your working life for you to live on when you retire. When you start working, your employer pays money towards your superannuation generally into an account of your choice.

It is compulsory for employers to pay super contributions into your account of at least 9% of your wages. The money is not taken from your wages, but is a benefit paid on top of your wages.

If you have worked in Australia and are now returning home, you may have superannuation money that you can claim and take with you. You can apply for this money as soon as you have left Australia.

For more information on superannuation follow the link:  
[www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Super](http://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Super)

## FINDING WORK

Queensland has the perfect combination of excellent educational facilities, job opportunities for skilled workers and a climate that provides great lifestyle options. Many international students take the opportunity to work in Australia while they are completing their studies.

### More information:

- Job Service Australia: [www.jobsearch.gov.au/serviceproviders](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au/serviceproviders)
- How to find jobs in Queensland, Australia: [www.migration.qld.gov.au](http://www.migration.qld.gov.au)
  - Department of Education – International Students: [www.education.qld.gov.au/international/](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/international/)
  - Department of Home Affairs: [www.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au)

## APPLYING FOR A JOB

Cairns is a great destination for those holding a student or working holiday visa and looking for casual work, especially in the tourism and hospitality industries.

For those looking for work, Cairns provides a range of opportunities in industries such as hospitality, retail, tourism, building and construction, farming and agriculture, business and accounting, and mining and mineral processing.

The Queensland Government's website also provides information on how to find jobs in Queensland - [www.qld.gov.au/jobs/finding/specific/migrant/finding](http://www.qld.gov.au/jobs/finding/specific/migrant/finding)

## YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

Australia's workplace relations system, Fair Work, officially came into effect for employers and employees across Australia from 1 July 2009.

The system is designed to balance the needs of employees, employers and unions and will allow workplaces to become more productive and competitive without taking away workplace rights and basic conditions.

- [www.employment.gov.au/international-labour-issues](http://www.employment.gov.au/international-labour-issues)





# BRINGING YOUR FAMILY

## VISA FOR FAMILIES

You and your family members can make a combined application or they can apply to join you later provided you declared them in your student visa application or they became a family member after the grant of your student visa (such as a newborn baby).

You must have funds to support yourself and all accompanying family members already in Australia as well as those included in the current application.

For more information visit:

[www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/visa-1/500-?modal=/trav/stud/brin](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/visa-1/500-?modal=/trav/stud/brin)



# CHECKLISTS

## BEFORE YOU LEAVE CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to make sure you have all the documents you'll need:

- Airline tickets and valid passport with student visa
- Letter of offer from your study institution or a confirmation of enrolment slip issued by the institution
- Receipts of any related payments you have made including tuition fees, health cover, etc
- Letter of scholarship award (if applicable)
- Original or certified copies of your academic transcripts
- English translation of prescriptions for any medications you are carrying
- Personal identification such as a driver's licence, or identity card, including an English translation
- Health insurance details (refer to Insurance page 5 and 18)
- Accommodation prebooked and confirmed

## FOR INFORMATION ON STUDY OPTIONS OR LIVING AND WORKING IN CAIRNS, CONTACT STUDY CAIRNS:

**Website:** [www.studycairns.com.au](http://www.studycairns.com.au)

**Email:** [info@studycairns.com.au](mailto:info@studycairns.com.au)

**Call:** +61 7 4080 2902

**Mail:** PO Box 1575, Cairns, Qld, Australia 4870

## FOR INFORMATION ON COUNCIL SERVICES AND PROJECTS, CONTACT CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL:

**Website:** [www.cairns.qld.gov.au](http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au)

**Email:** [council@cairns.qld.gov.au](mailto:council@cairns.qld.gov.au)

**Call:** 1300 692 247

**Mail:** PO Box 359, Cairns, Qld, Australia 4870





**STUDY  
CAIRNS**



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**Study**  
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