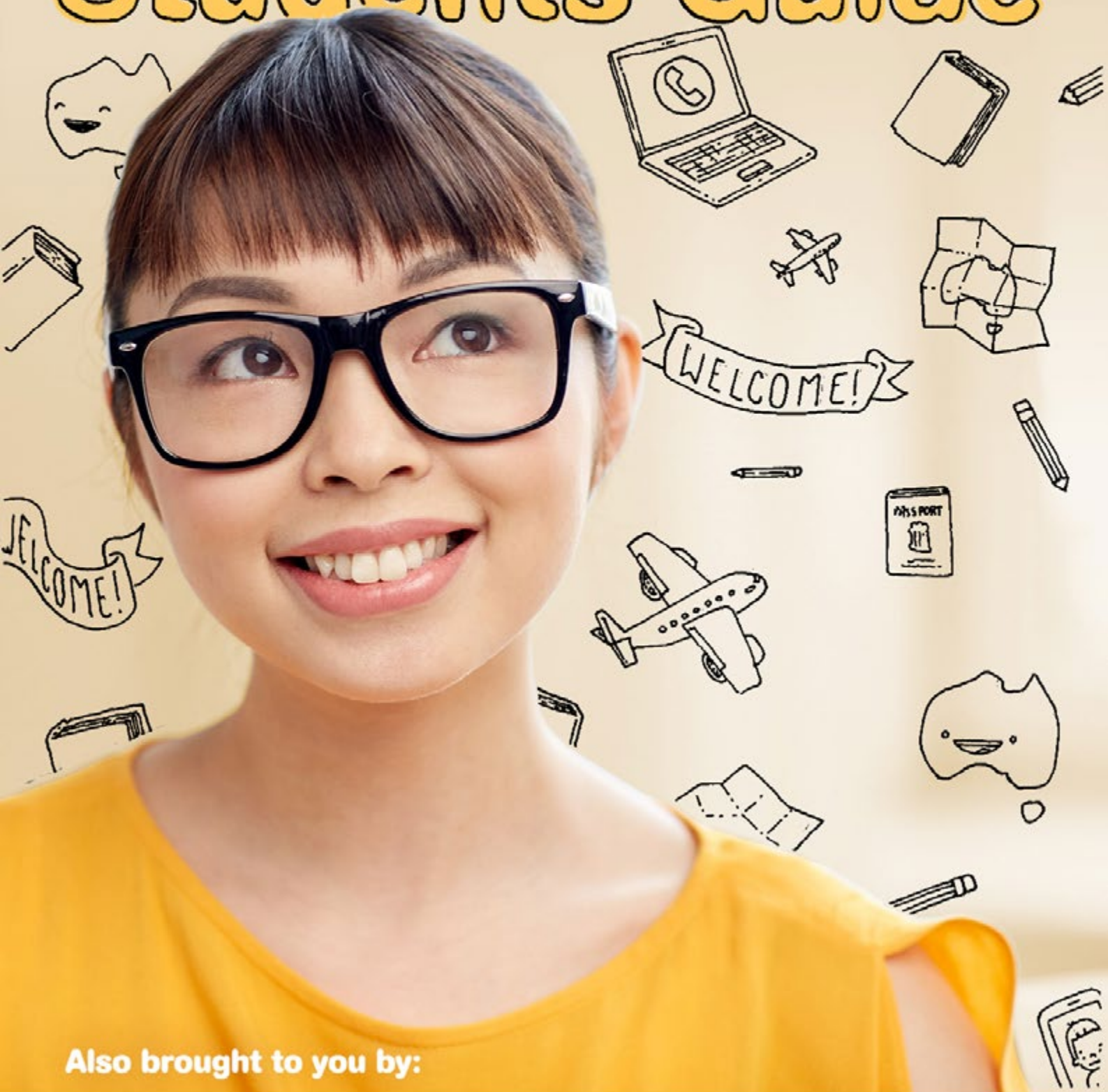


STUDENT EDGE PRESENTS

International Students Guide



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International Student In Oz? Here's What You Need To Know



By Louie Zhu

So, you've made it. You've come to Australia as an international student, ready to take in all of our cultural offerings. And to study of course. But sometimes it can be difficult coming to a new country where you're not familiar with the lay of the land, and the things you took for granted back home become a massive chore to learn and research. Here are a few things to help smooth that process.

NB: If you want to know how much it'll cost to make it as an international student in Australia, check out this [cost of living calculator](#).

Getting Around

To get anywhere you need to travel. Unless you are a multi-millionaire, you probably can't hire a car and afford the ridiculous parking fees in the city or hail a taxi every single time you want to get somewhere.

By far, the cheapest way to travel is by public transport. Apart from a couple of quirks, travelling by public transport is relatively pain-free (provided you don't do it during peak hour).

The first step is determining which travel smartcard you require. Whether it be Opal for NSW, myki for Victoria, go card for Queensland, or another card specific to your state, you'll need to get one to pay for public transport. Depending on the amount of travelling you plan on doing, you can either opt for buying single tickets each time you travel or loading up a smartcard with money.

For the more punctual of you, you can download apps like Tripview which can tell you exactly when your next train will be. These apps are also useful in letting you know where you should be switching trains or finding out when the last train leaves after a big night out.

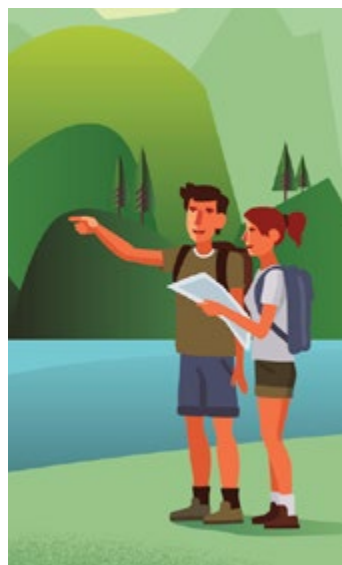
Talking The Talk

English is a difficult language to learn; sometimes you'll hear words that you didn't come across in class (or have just plain forgotten). Again, your

phone can be your friend.

Apps can translate words you see on signs and help you express yourself better when you need to ask a question. You can also use them to help with your studies if you're struggling with any unfamiliar words.

A highly recommended app is Microsoft's Translator, which reads out the translated words so you can follow along. You can also use language specific apps (like Pleco for Chinese-to-English translations).



Places To Visit

While you're here, you won't want to spend all of your time in your dorm room studying (although that's important too).

Where you should spend your leisure time comes down to personal preference. Interested in nature? Go on a national park walk (usually

a convenient distance from the major cities). Interested in arts and culture? There are plenty of museums strewn around the CBDs.

Also, try to take advantage of the extended amount of time that you're staying for. You might come back to Australia in the future, but you probably won't be here for as long as you are now. Try taking a look at the more niche attractions that are offered. Checking out the Sydney Opera House is a great idea, though you should also make time to get lost in the arts and shops in Melbourne's Laneways.

FYI: Domestic flights between the major cities can be ridiculously cheap if you book ahead (sometimes with prices lower than \$50). Take a weekend to explore another city and make the most out of your stay.

Just remember that although you came here to study, a big reason for coming to Australia specifically was to experience the culture and, just as importantly, have some fun. Hopefully this guide has made it easier for you to do that. 🇺🇸



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Combating Culture Shock As An International Student



By Anthony Pearce

Studying is tough enough without the additional challenge of moving countries. It's an experience you'll learn a lot from, and offer you a chance to grow as a person, though it can appear overwhelming at first.

Luckily, the best solutions are the most fun: Be curious, and be social.

Find A Welcoming Study Space

The first thing to deal with is making sure study doesn't overwhelm you, and finding people who are sharing the same experience as you: other international students. Luckily, more and more people are choosing to study abroad in Australia.

If your school doesn't have a study group specifically for international students, there's likely one to be found through your local community or tutoring service. Any kind of international student group will be a very helpful first step in getting settled.

If you're ever studying alone, finding a quiet, neutral place to study among others is important. Homes aren't always quite right for this, but public libraries are excellent. They've got books, Wi-Fi, and other (hopefully quiet) students.

Speaking of students, this brings us to...

Putting Yourself Out There

Once you've got your studying space sorted, it's time to be social. If you want to do more with your fellow students than just sit in silence, extra-curricular events (like sports, clubs, or regular social events) are a good choice. It can be hard to walk up to strangers and introduce yourself; yet, these events give you a common interest to talk about, and something to do together.

Sometimes, the easiest place to start is within your new home. It's likely that you're living with people who've been in the area for several years, and they can help you discover new places.

Try setting a regular time to go out to lunch at

least once a week. Social immersion is one of the best ways to get to know an area. The more time you spend exploring, going to new places, or sitting out in a familiar but busy spot, the less time it will take for you to feel at home.

Not to mention, it makes sure you're not spending too much time inside, studying. You didn't travel to a different country to sit inside and study 24/7, right?



Take Care Of Yourself

Don't be afraid to ask 'stupid' questions. You'll run into a lot of situations where you're not quite sure of something, and that's okay. Nobody knows everything, and it's probable that others will have questions that, for them, sound just as awkward.

Asking questions and sharing anecdotes as well as cultural norms with the people around you will also help to connect you. A quick question or funny story can be an icebreaker to many conversations. It means people will learn about you, and from you, too.

Despite the importance of being active, 'alone time' is important. To stay grounded, establish one night a week where you're not doing much; relax, sit, reflect on the week, and make plans for the next few days.

In the end, the best advice you can take is from those who have walked the same path you have. If you're at a loss, or want to ask a few questions, your school will have a student counsellor who can help.

You can also join a Facebook group and find people who have studied abroad in the past. Taking in a little bit of information and advice from real people is a lot of help, and a good way to pick up situation-specific tips. 

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What I Learnt From International Students



By Brittney Rigby

At the beginning of Year 10, I switched schools to attend an international college for my senior years. It was a big change, going from the local public school to one where there were only four Anglo-Australians in my year. But it was the best change I could have made. The rest of the cohort boarded at the school, and came from various parts of Asia.

I look back on those three years as the best of my life; where I learnt so many things from my classmates. Here's what studying with international student taught me.

Cultures are more diverse than you could imagine.

Before going to school with a bunch of international students, I understood that different Asian countries and regions had different traditions, customs and cultures. However, it wasn't until I had conversations with students from many of those countries that I understood that diversity in a way Wikipedia or Google simply could not explain.

My classmates taught me about their families, their lives and where they're from, and the school also did a great job of promoting our multiculturalism. We had an annual international festival, where students cooked food from their countries and sold it to the public, and put on a concert. Students were encouraged to share their experiences and we celebrated our differences and sameness.

You will learn more foreign languages from your friends than your teachers.

I learnt way more foreign words and phrases from informal conversations with friends than I did in our Chinese classes. (Another plus about going to an international school: Mandarin was a compulsory part of the curriculum!)

To be fair, many of these phrases were inappropriate (they're of course the ones I've remembered), but all in all, studying in an international environment was great for learning new things from new people.

You will have a bunch of tour guides when you travel overseas.

During school, I always had a ton of requests to travel overseas to visit my friends. After my final year of high school, I went on an Asian holiday with my family, and we finally took them up on that offer.

From Singapore to Hong Kong, my friends met us, showed us around and gave us a sneak peek into local life. Where else can you get such quality (and free) guided tours?

Holidays will be more boring than anticipated.

The one downside of friends being from other countries was their absence come school holidays. At the end of every term, most students would fly back home to see their family and friends, meaning I was left behind, bored, with seemingly nothing to do and no one to see.

On the flip side, this made going back to school something to look forward to, and first day back was (maybe surprisingly) met with excitement rather than dread.

Your friends will become family.

My classmates would be around at my house for dinner at least once a week, and we'd always hang out after school and on weekends. That's the biggest thing I learnt from my international friends: how quickly strangers can become friends, and then family, no matter the language we speak, the colour of our skin or where we come from. 🌍



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Six Aussie Foods To Check Off Your Bucket List



By Anne Tong

When you study overseas you'll probably be told that there are some foods you absolutely must try... and this is true. That's why we've come up with a list of quintessential foods from Down Under that you simply have to cross off your bucket list.

We like to keep things simple here in Australia; it's basically comfort food at its best. (Think lots of bread, meat and potatoes.) The best part? It's mostly pretty cheap, which would definitely help with student budgeting. No "ifs" or "buts"; consider this a "welcome to Australia" ritual.

Hot Chip Sandwiches

Not to be mistaken for a regular chip sandwich, which is similar, but uses potato crisps instead. A good hot chip sandwich is white bread, a thick slathering of margarine (or butter) and crispy tuck-shop potato chips that are dusted with chicken salt. Never heard of chicken salt? Firstly, you're missing out. Secondly, you are seriously missing out. If you love sodium as much as I do, tomato sauce is totally an acceptable condiment.

Fairy Bread

You might notice a trend here already. Hint: It's bread. Contrary to the very misleading name, fairy bread isn't actually baked by fairies. It's basically bread covered in a layer of hundreds-and-thousands sprinkles. Imagine if white bread and a rainbow had a sugary, delicious love child. They're a total hit at kids' parties; also, a complete guilty pleasure for every adult.

Meat Pies

What you read next might be controversial, but there's definitely a right way and a wrong way to eat a standard beef meat pie. This is the right way.

Step 1: Remove the top of the pie and eat the buttery puff pastry goodness. Step 2: Take your tomato sauce and mix it into the beef gravy filling; scoop it out with a spoon and enjoy. Step 3: At this point, you've deconstructed the pie so that it

no longer physically resembles a pie. Last thing is just to eat the pastry base. Boom. Done!

The Aussie Burger

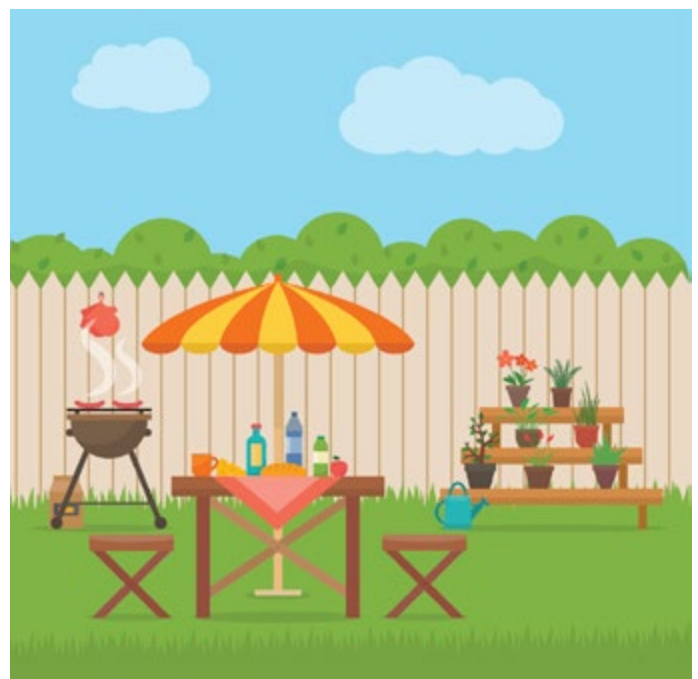
You're probably used to beetroot in salads, but burgers? Believe it or not, beetroot is a staple of your typical Aus-themed burger. That and eggs. I mean, it's safe to say that while eggs are the heavyweight breakfast food champion, they're also amazing at self-saucing burgers.

Sausage Sanga

By the way, sanga is actually just a code word for sandwich. To get your hands on the best sausage sanga possible, make your way down to any weekend fair or market. Look for the line of hungry parents and disenchanted kids, let your eyesight guide you down the queue, and you're bound to spot a barbeque, all fired up and decorated with perfect rows of grilled sausages. FYI, the undisputed king of sausage sangas can be found at polling booths on election day. Mmm, chargrilled democracy perfection.

Vegemite and Smashed Avo

Vegemite is the infamously scary looking sandwich spread that resembles black tar. Depending on who you ask, you might also hear that it tastes like black tar. I'd say, moderation is key. Grab yourself a piece of toast and spread a thin layer of vegemite on top. Hack on some avocado and smear it down with a fork. Congrats. You've now made smashed avo with a yeast-y twist. 🍷



Dealing With Change? Here Are Some Tips To Improve Your Resilience



By Student Edge & ReachOut.com

They say change is as good as a holiday, but sometimes the fear of the unknown can get the better of us, and when that happens, no platitudes can make us feel better.

But change sometimes truly is for the best; it's when amazing new opportunities arise and your life can take a turn for the amazing.

Still, we understand it's a concerning prospect.

That's why we asked ReachOut.com to give us some tips to help you build up your resilience and develop better coping skills.



'7 tips for dealing with change'

"Dealing with change isn't always easy. It can be uncomfortable, stressful or even scary at times. But the good news is, there are things you can do to make coping with life changes a little easier." [Read more.](#)

'Building better coping skills'

"Working out the right coping strategies to help you handle different situations can be tough, but it's worth it. Find out more about different coping strategies, including how to put them into practice, and tips for what to do when they don't work." [Read more.](#)

'All about making decisions'

"Indecision can have a really negative impact on how you're feeling, so good decision making skills are really useful when you're faced with a tough choice. Get tips on how to make good decisions, and find out what to do when you can't figure out a plan." [Read more.](#)

'Talking to my teenage self'

The ReachOut.com team reflected on their teenage years (when worries were a-plenty) and shared whether or not things ultimately worked out for the best. [Read more.](#)

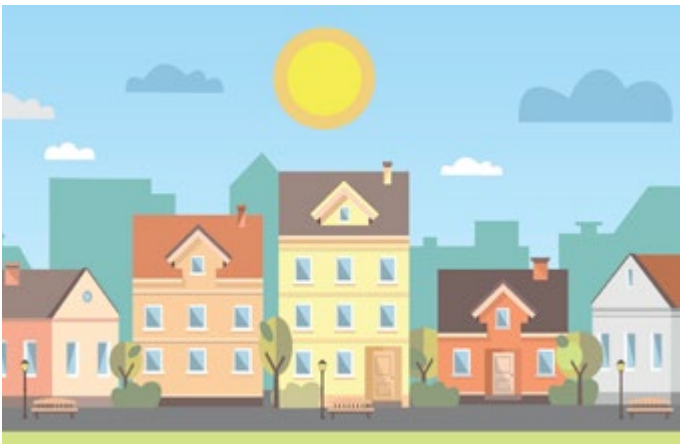
Visit [ReachOut.com](https://reachout.com) to get support to help you with everything from everyday issues through to tough times. 

The Essentials (So You Can Hit The Ground Running)

 *By Student Edge*

Studying abroad is often described as the experience of a lifetime, but it can also be pretty stressful.

We've come up with a list of things you need to know; from basic stuff like finding accommodation and opening a bank account, to ordering coffee and knowing the local lingo.



Finding Accommodation

Most universities offer some sort of student accommodation; these can be on-campus or off-campus. You may hear them referred to as “dormitories”, “villages” or “colleges”. Find out whether the university you’re going to has student accommodation [here](#).

There are also privately-run dormitories that aren’t affiliated with universities, but cater towards students. Some of the most popular ones are [UniLodge](#), [Urbanest](#) and [Iglu](#).

Of course, you can also rent your own place. Start your search on websites like [Domain](#) or [RealEstate](#). When you’ve picked out a place you’re interested in, get in touch with the agent who looks after the property. Their contact details are usually listed alongside the advert, so contact them via e-mail or phone. Be aware you may be required to provide some of your own details; things like name, age, occupation, income, tentative move-in date and so on.

The next step is to organise a viewing or “inspection” of the property. These can be overwhelming, but not if you’re equipped with the right questions. Make sure you write down what you want to ask the real estate agent beforehand. Some important ones might be: “Is rent due weekly, fortnightly or monthly?” “What’s the minimum and maximum contract length?” “How much is the bond?” “Is there on-site or off-site parking?” Questions are always worth asking, and it’s better to do that upfront than too late.

Once you find a place that suits your needs, you’ll need to go through the rental application process. Generally speaking, you’ll be asked to provide the following: forms of identification (passport, birth certificate), documentation of income (payslips, bank statements) and written references (from an employer, friend or previous landlord). Try to have all this ready as early as possible, because the last thing a real estate agent wants to do is chase up missing bits of paperwork.

If you really want to secure a place: Have your deposit ready. In some cases, it may take several days or upwards of a week to process your application. In that case, offer to pay a “security deposit” on the property so that other potential tenants can’t snap it up before you. The security deposit might be negotiable, but often it is the same price as the bond.

If your application is accepted, all that’s left is paying a bond (if you haven’t yet already), doing a thorough inspection and signing contracts. A bond is a deposit you pay at the start of a tenancy, and it is paid back at the end of your tenancy provided no damages are made. During the inspection, take note of any already existing damages to the property (stained carpet, dirty walls) and take photographic evidence. Better than taking the blame!

If you need to find a share-house, check out [Flatmates](#) and search by location. Another great place to find share-houses is on Facebook. If you type in “housemates”, followed by the general area you’d like to live, chances are there will be a Facebook group that you can join and search through.

If it’s temporary accommodation you’re after, there’s [Airbnb](#) and a variety of [hotels](#) and [youth hostels](#) available.

Setting Up Your Utilities

You'll need electricity, gas and water if you want to, you know, shower and cook. Here are some relevant sites for your state or territory: ACT: [Electricity and gas, water](#). QLD: [Electricity and gas, water](#). NSW: [Electricity and gas, water](#). NT: [Electricity, gas and water](#). SA: [Electricity and gas, water](#). TAS: [Electricity and gas, water](#). VIC: [Electricity and gas, water](#). WA: [Electricity and gas, water](#).

Opening A Bank Account

When you open a bank account you'll be asked to provide "100 points of ID" which is essentially where you provide different forms of documentation to prove your identity. A list of acceptable documents can be found [here](#).

The major four banks in Australia are [ANZ](#), [Commonwealth](#), [NAB](#) and [Westpac](#).

Commonwealth Bank has the most [ATM machines](#) across the country. However, all of the major banks have some form of online banking available, which you should find easily on your smartphone's app store.

Smaller banks can still be competitive. At [Bankwest](#), you can get a [Student Edge co-branded debit card](#), which you can use to get great discounts at hundreds of stores nationwide.

Getting/Transferring Your Driver's Licence

If you already have a license in your home country, you may be able to transfer it over. Otherwise, you can start from scratch and apply for a new licence. In any case, you'll need to visit a motor vehicle registry office. Here's where you can go for your relevant state or territory: [ACT](#), [NSW](#), [NT](#), [QLD](#), [SA](#), [TAS](#), [VIC](#), [WA](#).

Public Transport

Getting around on public transport (buses, trains, ferries) usually requires a travel card. Paper tickets still exist (in some states) but it's usually much more convenient to get yourself a pre-pay card that you load money onto as you go.

Read up on the state relevant to you: [ACT](#), [NSW](#), [NT](#), [QLD](#), [SA](#), [TAS](#), [VIC](#), [WA](#).

Private Health Insurance

Though you won't be covered by Australia's public healthcare system, [Medicare](#), you may be eligible to apply for Overseas Student Health Cover. This scheme helps you meet the costs of medical and hospital care while you're in Australia.

Another good idea is looking into private health insurers, of which, there are many to choose from. It's best to know that you've got yourself covered, in case of any emergencies or just general sickness. Some of the largest private health insurers are [ahm](#), [Australian Unity](#), [Bupa](#), [HCF](#), [HBF](#), [Medibank Private](#) and [nib](#).

Seeing A Doctor/Dentist

Most medical and dental centres will require you to make an appointment before you see a doctor or specialist. Make sure you check the claims process with your chosen health insurance provider. When booking an appointment, have your health insurance information on hand as the medical centre administrator will need them.

Doctors don't dispense medicine in Australia. Instead, they provide you with a prescription (aka, a "script") which you'll need to take to a chemist (aka "pharmacy") to purchase your medicine. Unlike other countries, many medicines in Australia are classified as '[prescription only](#)' so you won't be able to buy them over-the-counter.

Getting A Mobile Phone/Internet Provider

Australia has four major mobile phone providers: [Telstra](#), [Optus](#), [Virgin Mobile](#) and [Vodafone](#). (There are smaller ones if you want to shop around.)

If you sign up to a prepaid plan, you will need to load credit onto your phone, which is a great way to control your spending. A post-paid contract involves agreeing to an arrangement where you pay a monthly fee for a fixed period (usually 18 to 24 months).

Unlike in some other countries, free wireless internet is hard to come by in Australia (most require a password). If you want to set up your own broadband (or portable) internet access, the main providers are [iiNet](#), [Optus](#) and [TPG](#). 

One More Thing...



It'd be irresponsible to leave you without sharing the following info!

Know Your Supermarket Chains

The largest and most well-stocked supermarkets are: [Coles](#), [IGA](#) and [Woolworths](#).

There are also service stations ([BP](#)) and convenience stores ([7 Eleven](#)) where you can get everyday essentials.

Know Your Coffees

First thing's first: Starbucks hardly exists in Australia. The closest equivalent is [Gloria Jeans](#) or [Michel's Patisserie](#). Read more about [Australian coffee culture and etiquette](#).

Know Your Drink Sizes

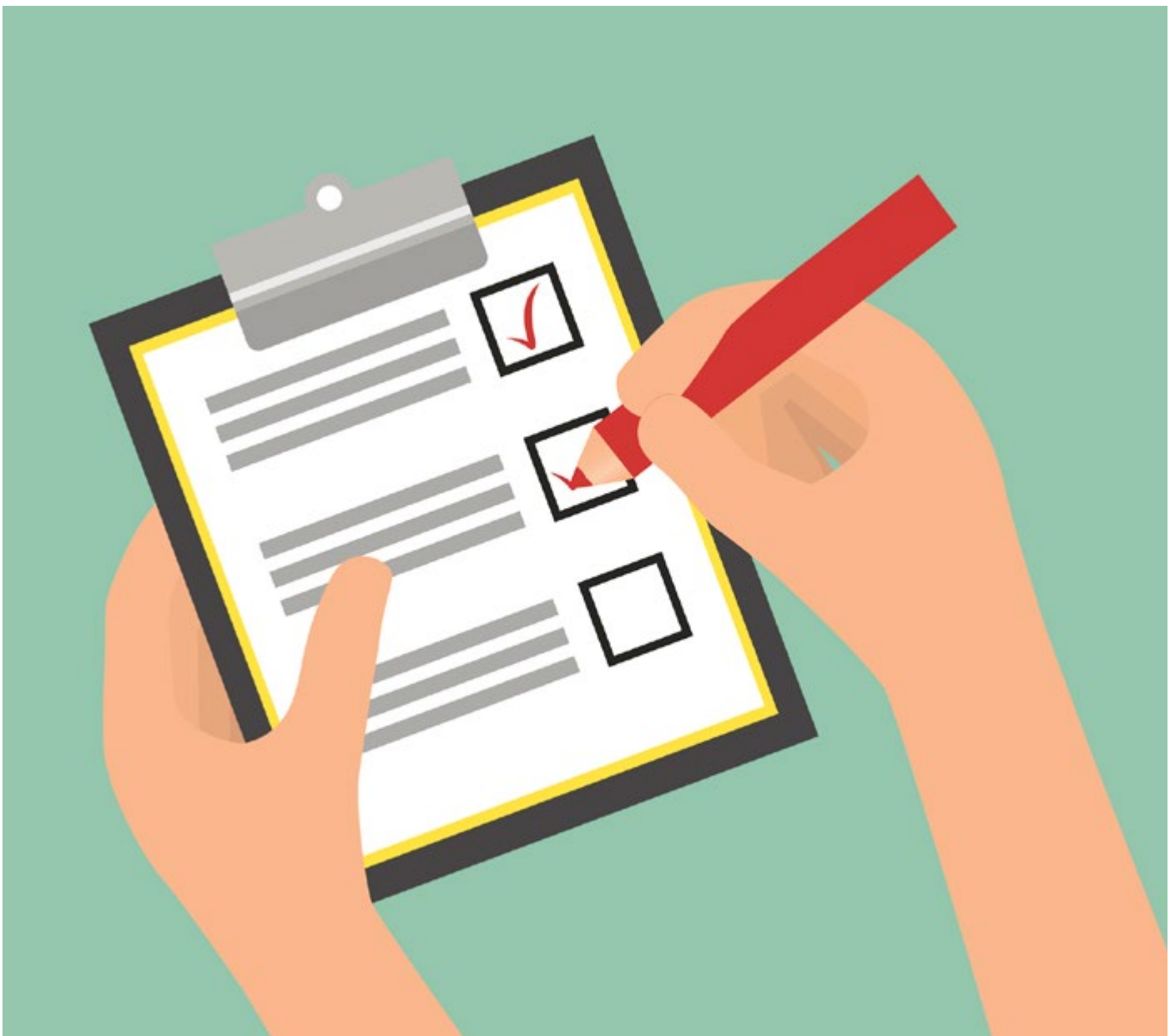
For a detailed guide of drinks and their alcoholic content, go [here](#). There are also specific terms for different drink sizes, which you can learn about [here](#).

Know Your Lingo

If there's one thing Aussies have a lot of, it's slang. Here's a [dictionary](#) to help equip you with all the lingo you might need.

Know Your Work Rights

It's important to know your work rights if you plan on being employed. There are certain rules around hours of permitted work, your rights as a worker and the responsibilities of your employer. In any case, make sure you give the [Fair Work](#) guide a thorough read. 





Student Edge is Australia's largest member-based organisation of high school, TAFE, VET and university students in Australia, with more than 900,000 members nationwide.

By allowing students to form and feel part of a larger collective, Student Edge is able to harness the power of the student community to support each other and give Australia's youth an advantage.

Student Edge is well known for its amazing discounts which can be redeemed upon presentation of the Student Edge app or discount card. Partners include McDonald's, Apple, Hoyts, The Iconic, Baskin-Robbins and many more. Those looking for more freebies can also enter our exclusive competitions.



Students may also come to our website for the latest in news, pop culture and politics, as well as movie and music reviews. We provide life hacks and 'cheat sheets' on a broad range of issues, from study to wellness to financial management. Members can discuss all these and more within our Forums.

Student Edge seeks to empower and support students to make great life choices, offering job listings in addition to career and pathway tips.

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