



International Student Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome to Byron Yoga Centre

Hello and congratulations on your decision to undertake your yoga teaching training with Byron Yoga Centre.

Moving overseas and studying for one year is a very important and big decision. In this handbook you will find information about obtaining your visa, what to expect in Australia, how to get insurance, accommodation and plenty more.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions and we look forward to meeting you soon.

John Ogilvie

Founder and Director, Byron Yoga Centre
Purna Yoga – asana | breath | meditation | philosophy



Byron Yoga Centre Main Contact Details:

Purna Yoga Pty Limited, trading as Byron Yoga Centre
Office and Retreat Centre: 50 Skinners Shoot Road, Byron Bay

Yoga Studio: 6 Byron Street, Byron Bay

Postal address: PO Box 721, Byron Bay, NSW 2481

Telephone: 02 6685 8327 Fax: 02 6678 0313

Website: www.byronyoga.com

International Student Coordinator/Advisor– Davina Kruse

Telephone: +61 (0)2 6685 8327 Fax: +61 (0)2 6678 0313

Email: assistant@byronyoga.com

International Student 24 Hour Emergency Contact

John Ogilvie: 0428 872 230

Emergency Telephone Numbers:

Police, Fire, Ambulance 000 Landline; 112 Mobile

In Australia dial 000 from any phone for fire, police or ambulance services. 112 may also be dialed from mobile phones. Dialing 112 will override key locks on mobile phones and therefore save time. Emergency Services operators answer this number quickly and to save time will say, "Police, Fire, or Ambulance". If you are unsure of what emergency service you need tell the operator what the emergency is. You will then be connected to the appropriate service to assist. It is wise to think ahead with the most important information which will help them to respond. Where you are; (note street names and the closest intersection), what has happened and to whom; what their condition is. The operator may then ask you to stay on the phone until the emergency services arrive. In life threatening situations the operator may also give you some instructions to assist until the emergency unit arrives. If you are concerned about your English, remain calm and work with the operators who are very experienced with all cultures.

The Emergency Service should be used to contact Police, Fire or Ambulance services in life threatening or emergency situations only. Emergency 000 lines should not be used for general medical assistance.

Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

Ground Floor, 299 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4000

Mail address PO 9984, Brisbane, Qld 4001

Office hours 9 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday

Telephone: 131 881

Medical Centres:

North Coast Medical Centre, 24 Shirley Street, Byron Bay (02) 6685 8666
general medical practitioners, osteopaths, naturopaths, psychologists, psychiatrists
or

Holdsworth House, 37 Fletcher Street, Byron Bay (02) 6680 7211

Emergency Medical Treatment

In case of sickness out of normal business hours, Byron Bay Hospital, Shirley Street, Byron Bay has an emergency department with nurses in attendance and doctors on call.

Transport:

Blanch's Bus Service: blanchs.com.au (02) 6686 2144

Brunswick Valley Coaches: brunswickvalleycoaches.com.au (02) 6680 1566

Byron Taxis: byronbaytaxis.com.au 131008

Bicycles are a common form of transport in Byron Bay. They are sold and rented at several locations in Byron Bay. Byron Yoga Centre can also arrange the rental of a bicycle. Be aware

that failure to wear a bicycle helmet is an offence.

Public Facilities

Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are located outside the National Australia Bank, ANZ Bank and Commonwealth Bank, all in Jonson Street, Byron Bay.

Public Telephones are located at Railway Park, Jonson Street, Byron Bay, near the pedestrian crossing.

Local Telephone Calls cost \$0.50. Long-distance and international calls are generally less expensive on Sundays. Pre Paid Telephone Cards cost \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$50 and may be purchased at most newsagencies, post offices and convenience stores.

Visit www.whitepages.com.au and www.yellowpages.com.au for directories of residential, commercial and government phone numbers in Australia; and for a list of country codes and area codes for international calls.

Public toilets are located at Railway Park, Jonson Street, and at Main Beach, Bay Street.

Byron Bay Post Office is located opposite Railway Park, in Jonson Street, near the pedestrian crossing.

Byron Bay Public Library is located on the corner of Lawson and Middleton Streets, Byron Bay. It has internet access, study areas. Fiction, non-fiction and reference books are available for perusal and temporary memberships may be available in some circumstances.

Application Step-by-Step Process Model:

- STEP 1:** Student enquiry and Enrolment application
(via agent, email, phone or fax)
- STEP 2:** Letter of Offer by Byron Yoga Centre
- STEP 3:** Student Acceptance of Offer
Return signed forms, provide required evidence, pay
deposit of fees
- STEP 4:** Confirmation of Enrolment
- STEP 5:** Student finalises Visa Conditions with
Department of Immigration and Citizenship
(DIAC)
- STEP 6:** Student finalises Health Insurance arrangements (OHSC)
- STEP 7:** Student makes Payment of balance of fees
- STEP 8:** Student makes travel and/or accommodation
arrangements
- STEP 9:** Student arrives in Australia and sets up living
arrangements, mobile phone, bank account etc.
- STEP 10;** Student arrives at Byron Yoga Centre Office and
Reception for Orientation and beginning of Course

Course Fees and Charges

Fees are payable as follows:

Upon acceptance of application for enrolment a non-refundable deposit of AU\$1500.

Six weeks prior to course commencement, a further AU\$3500.

On or before the date which is two weeks before the commencement of the second term of training the balance of AU\$5000.

In the event that a student does not receive a visa, an administration fee of AU\$250 will be retained by Byron Yoga Centre and all other monies paid by the student will be refunded.

Things to Do:

Before Leaving Home:

- Apply for passport
- Arrange student visa (student VISA 500)
- Check documents on Department of Immigration website
<https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/500->
- Make contact with Byron Yoga Centre
- Arrange for immunisations and medications from your doctor
- Apply for a credit card and/or arrange sufficient funds
- Confirm overseas access to your funds with your bank
- Make travel arrangements
- Arrange travel insurance
- Advise Byron Yoga Centre of travel details
- Arrange accommodation
- Arrange transport from airport to accommodation
- Pack bags, being sure to include the following:
- Contact details of Byron Yoga Centre's representative John Ogilvie
- Enough currency for taxis, buses, phone calls etc. in the event of an emergency
- Important documents:
- THIS HANDBOOK!
- Passport
- Letter of offer
- CoE (Confirmation of Enrolment)
- Certified copies of qualifications & certificates
- Travel insurance policy
- ID cards, drivers license, birth certificate (or copy)

NOTE: Make sure you leave any originals or copies of these documents safely with family in your home country in case of loss

Upon Arrival in Australia:

- Call home
- Settle into accommodation
- Contact Byron Yoga Centre
- Purchase household items and food
- Get student ID card from Byron Yoga Centre
- Advise health insurance company of address & get card
- Open a bank account
- Purchase textbooks
- Attend international student orientation and begin course study
- Apply for tax file number if seeking work

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Introduction to Australia

Australia is an English speaking country. The standard of living and the quality of education are high while living costs are much lower than most other western countries. Australia is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world, and is considered one of the safest study destinations.

Australia is the land of contrasts - sweeping golden beaches, coral reefs rich with marine life, tropical rainforests, mountain ranges, vast grazing lands and sparse deserts. Surrounded by the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and the only country to occupy an entire continent, Australia has many unique plants and animals.

The surface geology is typically old and flat, with a major mountain range stretching down the eastern coast and another mountain range in the north west of the continent, and a desert in the centre.

Useful links:

www.about-australia.com

www.tourism.australia.com

Introduction to Byron Bay

Cape Byron is Australia's most easterly point, located on the North Coast of New South Wales. With its numerous beaches, unspoilt hinterland, and relaxed lifestyle, Byron Bay is a popular tourist destination. It is also a place where artists, musicians, dancers, writers, surfers, healers and of course yogis express their diversity and individuality.

The town has all major facilities: a hospital, cinemas, supermarkets, health food stores and great restaurants, as well as a flourishing alternative health industry. Bicycle is the easiest way to get around town and bicycle rentals are easily organised through Byron Yoga Centre (see Lochsley Thompson).

The average summer temperature is 21C - 28C, and average winter temperature is 15C - 21C, There are also periods of heavy rainfall, especially in summer. The area has a total annual rainfall of 1734mm.

Byron Shire has a population of close to 30,000, while the town of Byron Bay has a population of about 9,000.

Byron Bay is located just off the Pacific Highway, 800kms north of Sydney, 175kms south of Brisbane. Airports are located in Ballina (30mins south) or Coolangatta (60mins north) and buses and trains arrive regularly.

The following websites provide information about Byron Bay and the surrounding area:

www.byronbay.com

www.echo.net.au

www.byronbaynow.com

Introduction to Byron Yoga Centre

Byron Yoga Centre is one of the longest running yoga schools in Australia, as well as one of the few yoga teacher training organisations that operate as an RTO (Registered Training Organisation), offering the highest possible qualification in yoga teaching. Byron Yoga Centre's teacher training programs are designed to be affordable and flexible. We offer residential or non-residential, intensive or part-time courses, at the 200 and 500-hour levels, as well as the new Certificate IV in Yoga Teaching.

When you make the pivotal decision to embark on yoga teacher training, you know you're in safe hands with Byron Yoga Centre.

Our teacher trainers are all well-trained, experienced, and passionate about supporting you on your professional and personal journey.

Reflecting the holistic approach of our signature yoga style, Purna Yoga, the teacher training courses at Byron Yoga Centre are comprehensive and thorough, covering the many diverse elements of yoga, including systematic analysis of the postures, the breathing techniques, as well as the more subtle branches of meditation, philosophy and ethics.

We aim to maintain a standard of excellence in yoga education with a robust faculty of resident and guest senior teachers who are experts in their respective fields, such as Anatomy and Physiology, Yoga Philosophy, Yoga Therapy, Women's Health, Ayurveda, and Kirtan (chanting).

Yoga Teacher Training courses are held at our studio at 6 Byron Street, Byron Bay and at our retreat centre at 50 Skinners Shoot Road, Byron Bay.

At our retreat centre we have a limited amount of ashram-style accommodation available – for enquiries contact: admin@byronyoga.com

Arranging Visas

Most international students wanting to study in Australia require a student visa. Some other visa holders are also eligible to study as international students in Australia. Many students apply for a visa themselves on-line or via the Australian Diplomatic Mission in their country. <https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/500->

The visa application process can be complicated and for students from some countries it may be better to submit an application with the assistance of an accredited agent due to their familiarity and experience in the field. You should check with Byron Yoga Centre in Australia for their accredited agents in your country.

In order to apply for a student visa you will need a valid passport, an electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE) and any other documentation required by the Australian diplomatic post with which you lodge your application. You must ensure to allow enough time for processing between lodging your application and the start of your training course, as it can be a lengthy process depending on your country of origin. It is YOUR responsibility to arrange your visa before you arrive in Australia.

Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

The Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Citizenship provides comprehensive information about student visa requirements and the application process, as well as application document checklists to assist you with your application.

Visit www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm for the latest information.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

As well as links from the DIAC website the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website www.dfat.gov.au/embassies has a comprehensive list of Australian embassies, high commissions, consulates and representative offices around the world.

Migration Agents

A migration agent can assist you in submitting your visa application and communicate with DIAC on your behalf, but please note that you do not need to use a migration agent to lodge any kind of visa application.

Education Agents

Education agents promote various Australian education programs and institutions internationally and are a good way for students to apply to study in Australia. Agents are experienced in making international student applications and applying for visas. Most speak both English and the local language so this makes the application process a lot simpler and generally hassle free for students and parents. Most do not charge for their service as they collect a commission from the institution you choose to attend. However, some agents do charge small amounts or offer additional services for which they charge. You can check with Byron Yoga Centre for contact details of agents they recommend.

Please Note: Although able to assist in completing education and visa applications, Education Agents are NOT licensed to provide migration advice.

Visa Conditions

If you are granted a visa, you must abide by its conditions. Failure to comply with these conditions could result in the cancellation of your visa. These conditions include (but are not limited to):

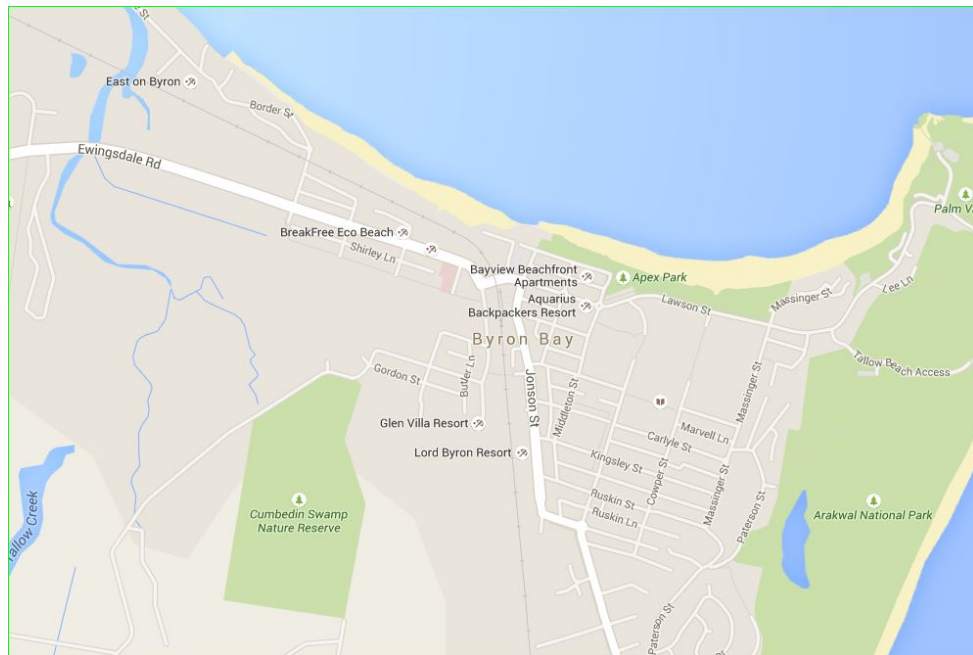
- Complete the course within the duration specified in the CoE
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress
- Maintain approved Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) while in Australia
- Remain with the principal education provider for 6 calendar months, unless issued a letter of release from the provider to attend another institution
- Notify your training provider of your Australian address and any subsequent changes of address within 7 days.

For a full list of mandatory and discretionary student visa conditions please visit www.immi.gov.au/Study/Pages/Study

Arranging Travel

You will need to make your own travel arrangements to Australia. Please try to arrive at least 2 weeks before the start of the course to allow enough time for settling-in, adjusting to the climate and overcoming jet-lag.

You should fly into Brisbane International Airport, which is the closest international airport to Byron Bay. Visit www.bne.com.au Byron Bay is located 175kms from Brisbane International Airport.



[Link to Byron Map](#)

Documents

You should prepare a folder of official documents to bring with you to Australia, including:

- Valid passport with Student Visa
- Offer of a place / admission letter from Byron Yoga Centre
- Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE) issued by Byron Yoga Centre
- Receipts of payments (e.g. tuition fees, OSHC, bank statements etc.)
- Insurance policies
- Original or certified copies of your academic transcripts and qualifications
- Other personal identification documents, e.g. birth certificate, ID card, driver's licence
- Medical records and/or prescriptions.

Keep all documents in your carry-on luggage. In case you lose the originals, make copies that can be left behind with family and sent to you.

What to Bring

Students are often surprised by how strict Australian Customs Services and Quarantine can be. If you're in doubt about whether your goods are prohibited or not, declare it anyway on the Incoming Passenger Card which you will receive on the plane. Students have received on the spot fines for not declaring items. Visit the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) homepage www.aqis.gov.au:

- Read "What can't I take into Australia?"
- And also let your family and friends know "What can't be mailed to Australia?"

Baggage allowances flying into Australia will vary according to your carrier, flight class and country of origin. Please check with your carrier prior to departure. Economy passengers are generally permitted 1 x checked luggage (35kg) and 1 x carry-on (7kg) for international flights, but only 20kg of checked luggage on domestic flights within Australia. This will significantly limit the amount of things you can bring, especially if you will fly within Australia to get to your final destination. Therefore, it is essential to think the packing process through very carefully. You will be able to purchase most things upon arrival in Australia but the price may be higher than in your own country.

Seasonal Considerations

Summer in Australia is from December to February, autumn from March to May, winter from June to August, and spring from September to November. For most of the country the hottest months are January and February.

If you arrive in June or July, the coldest months of the year, you may need to bring or buy winter clothing and blankets. You may also need to purchase a heating appliance once you arrive.

Clothing

For yoga teacher training, the most appropriate clothing is yoga or exercise wear, or loose comfortable clothes. Shorts are often worn during the summer months and sandals are the most common footwear. It is acceptable for both men and women to wear shorts and sleeveless t-shirts. This is common during the hotter months. In winter, some warm clothes are needed for early mornings and evenings.

More formal dress for women may be desired for social events. For festive occasions, you may want to bring traditional dress and accessories.

Other items you might need to include (most can also be purchased in Australia)

- alarm clock
- bath towels, bed sheets, pillow cases
- dictionary (bilingual)
- small sewing kit
- music CDs or iPod
- sporting equipment
- toiletries
- umbrella
- camera
- micro recorder for lectures
- spare spectacles or contact lenses
- your optical prescription
- photos of friends and family
- swimming costume
- small gifts from home

Bringing your Computer

The standard voltage for electrical items in Australia is 240V. Electric plugs have three flat pins one of which is an earth pin. You may need to buy an adaptor or have the plugs changed when you arrive.

Bringing a PC or laptop into Australia may be a little more complicated. Items owned and

used for more than 12 months prior to arrival are allowed in tax-free. Proof of the date of purchase and purchase price may be required. Computers which are less than 12 months old and over AU\$400 may attract Goods and Services tax (GST) at a rate of 10%. Consideration is given as to whether or not you intend to export the computer at the conclusion of your studies.

To satisfy the Customs Officer that you will be taking the computer out of Australia you should bring along a statutory declaration (a written declaration witnessed by the certifying authority in your country) stating that the computer is for use during your studies in Australia, and that you intend to take it back with you when you complete your studies. You may be required to give an undertaking under Section 162 to this effect and provide a cash security to Australia Customs upon arrival.

Mobile Phones & Laptops

If you are considering bringing a mobile phone, laptop, or any communication devices we suggest that you visit the Australian Communications and Media Authority, www.acma.gov.au before making any purchases. Some students have brought in their own laptops with internal modems only to discover that they were unable to use their modem in Australia. Any external or built-in modems must be Austel Approved in order to function in Australia.

On your Flight

Wear comfortable, layered clothing so that you are able to make adjustments according to the local weather. Remember – if you are flying from a northern hemisphere winter into the Australian summer it will be very HOT so wear light weight clothing underneath, and have a pair of sandals or lighter shoes in your hand luggage if you need cooler footwear. Alternatively extra clothing may be required on-hand if flying into the Australian winter season.

Before landing in Australia passengers are given an Incoming Passenger Card to fill in. This is a legal document. You must tick YES if you are carrying any food, plant material including wooden souvenirs, or animal products. This includes fruit given to you during your flight. If you have items you don't wish to declare, you can dispose of them in quarantine bins in the airport terminal. Don't be afraid to ask airline staff if you have any questions. If you are carrying more than AU\$10,000 in cash, you must also declare this on your Incoming Passenger Card. It is strongly recommended however, that you do not carry large sums of cash but arrange for an electronic transfer of funds into your Australian bank account once it has been opened.

Entry into Australia – Australian Immigration

When you first arrive in Australia you will be required to make your way through Australian Immigration (follow the signs for Arriving Passengers as you leave the plane). An Immigration Officer will ask to see your completed Incoming Passenger Card (given to you on the plane) along with your passport and student visa evidence. The Immigration Officer will check your documents and may ask you a few questions about your plans for your stay in Australia.

Baggage Claim

Once you have passed through the immigration checks you will move to baggage claim (follow the signs) and collect your luggage. Check that nothing is missing or damaged. If something is missing or damaged go to the Baggage Counter and advise them of your problem. Staff at the Baggage Counter will help you to find your belongings or lodge a claim for damage.

Detector Dogs

You may see a Quarantine Detector Dog at the baggage carousel or while waiting in line to pass through immigration, screening luggage for food, plant material or animal products. If you see a detector dog working close to you, please place your bags on the floor for inspection. These dogs are not dangerous to humans and are trained to detect odours. Sometimes a dog will sit next to your bag if it sniffs a target odour. Sometimes dogs will detect odours left from food you have had in the bag previously. A quarantine officer may ask about the contents of your bag and check you are not carrying items that present a quarantine risk to Australia.

Australian Customs and Quarantine

Once you have your luggage you will go through Customs. Be careful about what you bring into Australia. Some items you might bring from overseas can carry pests and diseases that Australia doesn't have. You must declare ALL food, meat, fruit, plants, seeds, wooden souvenirs, animal or plant materials or their derivatives.

Australia has strict quarantine laws and tough on-the-spot fines. Every piece of luggage is now screened or x-rayed by quarantine officers, detector dog teams and x-ray machines. If you fail to declare or dispose of any quarantine items, or make a false declaration, you will get caught. In addition to on-the-spot fines, you could be prosecuted and fined more than AU\$60,000 and risk 10 years in prison. All international mail is also screened.

Some products may require treatment to make them safe. Items that are restricted because of the risk of pests and disease will be seized and destroyed by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS).

For more detailed information about bringing in food, animals, plants, animal or plant materials or their derivatives visit www.daffa.gov.au/aqis.

Arrivals Hall

You will be able to leave the restricted area and enter the Arrivals Hall once you have cleared Customs. Here you will find a number of retail and food outlets along with public telephones, an information booth and money exchange facilities. If you arrive on a weekend, you may like to exchange money here as most banks are not open on Saturdays and Sundays.

Getting from the Airport

There are several bus companies who travel from Brisbane and Gold Coast Airports to Byron Bay:

- www.byronbayshuttle.com.au (02) 6685 7447
- www.greyhound.com.au
- www.brisbane2byron.com (07) 5443 4175

Keeping in Contact

Before you leave home, you should provide your family and friends, and Byron Yoga Centre, with details of your flights to Australia and where you will be staying when you arrive. (Do not change these details without informing them.) Once you have arrived in Australia, you should then let your family and friends, and Byron Yoga Centre know that you have arrived safely. It is important to ALWAYS let someone know where you are and how to contact you by phone or by post.

You can call Byron Yoga Centre's administration office on (02) 6685 8327 and advise us of your address and telephone number in Australia.

Accessing Money

You should read this section carefully, and discuss the issues raised in this section with the bank or financial institution in your home country before you leave. All banks operate differently and you should be aware of all fees, charges, ease of access to your funds, and safety of the way in which you will access those funds.

You will need to make sure you have enough funds to support you when you first arrive. It is recommended that you have approximately AU\$1500 to AU\$2000 available for the first two to three weeks to pay for temporary accommodation and transport. You should bring most of this money as either traveler's cheques or on an international credit card. Traveler's cheques can be cashed at any bank or currency exchange in Australia.

Please note that it is not safe to bring large sums of money with you! Lost credit cards or traveler's cheques can be replaced, but very few travel insurance companies will replace lost or stolen cash. Do not ask someone you have just met to handle your cash for you or to take your cash to make payments for you. Not even someone who may indicate they are studying at the same education institution.

Currency Exchange

Only Australian currency can be used in Australia. If you have not brought some with you, you will need to do so as soon as possible after arrival. You can do this at the airport. Once you have arrived in Byron Bay, you can also change money at any bank or at the Atlas Currency Exchange at 4/47 Byron Street, Byron Bay.

Electronic Transfer

You can transfer money into Australia by electronic telegraph or telegraphic transfer at any time. This is a fast option and will take approximately 48 hours, but the bank will charge a fee on every transaction.

ATMs

Automatic Teller Machines are located everywhere (including at the airport) and you can immediately withdraw cash from your overseas bank account at ATMs displaying the Cirrus Logo (if your ATM card has international access). Check this with your financial institution before leaving home.

Credit Cards

All major international credit cards are accepted in Australia but you must remember that repayments to many of these cards can only be made in the country where they were issued. Do not rely on being able to get a credit card once you arrive in Australia because this is very difficult due to credit and identification laws.

Arranging Accommodation

There is the possibility of shared accommodation in Byron Bay:

www.echo.net.au/classified-ads

www.airbnb.com.au/ByronBay

www.flatmates.com.au/2481/byron-bay

Local Real Estate Agents who manage rental accommodation are:

Ray White: www.rwbyronbay.com

First National: www.byronbayfn.com.au

Raine & Horne: www.raineandhorne.com.au/byronbay

L J Hooker: www.ljhooker.com.au

Temporary Accommodation: Hotels, Motels & Backpackers

Generally, the price you pay for accommodation will determine its quality. However, it can be expensive to stay in a good quality motel or hotel for a long period of time. Backpacker accommodation is relatively inexpensive but you may need to bring your own pillow and sleeping bag if you choose this option. For backpacker accommodation in Byron Bay:

www.hostelworld.com/Byron_Bay

www.byron-bay.com/hostel/

www.nomadsworld.com (very close to Byron Yoga Retreat Centre)

www.aquarius-backpackers.com.au

www.backpackersinnbyronbay.com.au

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Things to Keep in Mind When Renting:

Security Deposits/Bond

The owner or agent of an owner who has the right to rent you a property is called the landlord. A landlord will ask you for money before you move into an apartment. This is called a security deposit or bond, and may amount to more than AU\$1,000 dollars. The bond is usually set at four weeks' rent. A bond/"security deposit" is an amount of money that is supposed to guarantee that the tenant will care for the property. If the tenant does not care for the property or clean it before leaving, the landlord has a legal right to keep the security deposit. Otherwise, the landlord must return the security deposit within a month after the tenant leaves. The landlord or agent is obliged to lodge the security deposit with an organization called Rental Bond Board, to be held until the property is vacated.

Signing a Lease

In most cases, the landlord will require the tenant to sign a lease. A lease is a written agreement between a tenant and a landlord that describes the responsibilities of each party. This is a binding legal document that commits the student to a specific period of residency in the unit.

Inspection of Property

Most landlords will inspect the property with you on commencement of your tenancy. This is done with a list of furniture and fittings in each room of the property so that the two of you can agree on the condition of the property at the commencement of the tenancy. You should note on this document anything you notice during the inspection that is not already listed, and keep a copy that has been signed by both of you. Once you are the tenant, the condition of these things will be your responsibility. This will be done again at the end of your tenancy and the final condition of the property may determine the return of your full security deposit. If this inspection is not suggested, you might suggest it yourself as a means of ensuring fair treatment for all parties involved.

Utilities

Unless someone is already living in the dwelling, the new tenant must start utility services, such as telephone, electricity, and gas. This requires contacting each individual company and arranging for the services to be connected from a specified date. The companies providing these utilities also require a small security deposit. If someone has vacated the property before you, contacting these utility companies for connection of services will ensure all previous accounts have been finalised and paid for by the previous tenant.

Restrictions

The lease may contain restrictions, such as not permitting animals or children in the dwelling. Ask the landlord about his/her particular requirements. Make sure that you know and understand these restrictions before signing the lease. If you do not obey the restrictions on the lease, the landlord can ask you to leave.

Inspecting a Potential Property

It's a good idea to take notes of each property you inspect. As well as the address, rent, and agent take notes of the details:

- Are there laundry facilities?
- Is there a telephone line already connected?
- Do the light fittings work?
- Is the oven/ stove, gas or electrical?
- Do the toilet and shower all work?
- Is there damp or mold on the walls?
- Is there painting required?
- Is the place furnished? What kind of furniture?
- What kind of heating/cooling is there?
- Is there an insect/ pest problem?
- Is it close to transport, shops, and Byron Yoga Centre?
- Will the area be noisy? Is it on a busy road?

- Is there good security?
- Will the landlord carry out any repairs before you move in?
- How are repairs made once you live there, and who pays for which repairs?
- Are smoke alarms fitted in all the bedrooms?

Choosing a Roommate

The task of choosing a roommate needs to be taken very seriously. The person or persons with whom you decide to live can affect the quality and productiveness of your international student experience in Australia. When the moment comes for you to make your decision concerning roommates, remember these tips: don't panic, take your time, and don't compromise on important principles.

Bills & Expenses

Do you and your roommates expect to share the costs of buying toilet paper, washing powder for clothes and dishes, cleaning supplies etc. which is used by everyone?

If you are answering an advertisement for a roommate; what does the rental price cover? Does it include utilities, or are they split equally when the accounts are due? Who will pay them and how will you all know they have been paid?

Getting help

If you need help in relation to a lease or tenancy, you can talk to Byron Yoga Centre, or contact: The Tenants Union of NSW www.tenants.org.au/resources/1

Mobile Phones and Computer & Internet Access

Before bringing your mobile phone to Australia check with the Australian Communications and Media Authority: www.acma.gov.au to make sure it can operate here. Some countries, such as Japan and the USA, use mobile phone networks that are not available in Australia. If not, you can buy your mobile phone in Australia. Australian telecommunications providers offer a wide range of services which provide a mobile phone within the cost of using that service. There are many differences to the services provided. You should understand what deal you are accepting before signing a contract with a provider. For a comparison of mobile phone plans in Australia see: www.mobiles.com.au/mobile-phone-plans/

Some of the mobile phone companies will also provide you with internet access. In fact, you may be able to make arrangements with a company where you can get cheaper rates if you have internet and mobile phone through the one service provider. In addition, with provider Telstra: www.telstra.com, you could get a packaged deal for your home phone, internet and mobile phone. Internet access is available at Byron Yoga Centre and at Byron Public Library, in Lawson Street, Byron Bay.

Shopping

Standard business hours in Australia are 9am to 5 pm Monday to Friday. Shops and businesses are often also open on Saturdays and Sundays in Byron Bay to cater for tourism. Supermarkets are generally open until about 9pm.

Bargaining/Haggling

When shopping in Australia, you generally don't bargain or barter (also called haggling) for the price of an item. The displayed price for items is fixed and if Australian GST (Goods & Services Tax) is applicable it will already be included in the displayed price. However, there are exceptions to this rule. There are places and circumstances in which it is perfectly acceptable to barter for the best price possible. These may include: at garage sales, community markets, second hand dealerships, or at electrical goods' stores, furniture shops, or when purchasing a motor vehicle if you are offering to pay in cash, or have seen the item at a competitor store for a better price.

If you are paying by CASH and, if you are buying more than one item, you may have more bargaining power. Begin the bargaining process by asking:

"What's the best price you can give me?"

Or at a garage sale, you might pick up several items whose combined total is \$50 and say:

"I'll offer you \$30 for all of these."

Purchasing an Item

The most common methods of purchasing items are by cash or EFTPOS. EFTPOS (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale) allows you to use the card attached to your Australian bank account to make purchases and withdraw cash at the same time (at the retailer's discretion) from more than 103,000 merchants across Australia. Just swipe your keycard through the EFTPOS card reader, select your account type and enter your PIN number. EFTPOS is available at most supermarkets, petrol stations and retail outlets. Just look for the EFTPOS sign. You can choose to make the EFTPOS transaction from your savings account, cheque account or credit card. You receive a printed receipt after each purchase and the transaction appears on your statement.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

Overseas student health cover (OSHC) is insurance that provides cover for the costs of medical and hospital care which international students may need while in Australia and is mandatory for international student visa holders. OSHC will also cover the cost of emergency ambulance transport and most prescription drugs. Only Australian health funds that have signed an agreement with the Australian Government can provide OSHC. OSHC providers are:

- Medibank Private: www.medibank.com.au
- OSHC Worldcare: www.oshcworldcare.com.au
- BUPA OSHC: www.overseasstudenthealth.com
- Australian Health Management: www.ahm.com.au

You will need to provide evidence of your membership and payment at time of processing your enrolment to study in Australia.

You may choose to change your health fund at any time, but will need to abide by the conditions of change of the health fund provider you are leaving.

Students may also take out additional cover in the form of Extra OSHC and students who could not previously access OSHC may now be able to access Optional OSHC. Some students may be exempt from enrolling in the OSHC such as students from countries whose Governments may have Reciprocal Health Agreements for students in Australia.

Note: only some reciprocal health agreements cover students in Australia, some will only cover visitors. You should determine if you are eligible before you apply for your visa to come to Australia.

Further information on OSHC can be found at:

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-privatehealth-consumers-ovc.htm

If you come to Australia on a visa other than a student visa and undertake a short course of study of three months duration or less you will not be eligible for OSHC. It is wise to purchase travel or private medical insurance in this case.

OSHC provides a safety net for medical expenses for international students, similar to that provided to Australians through Medicare. Additionally, OSHC includes access to some private hospitals and day surgeries, ambulance cover and benefits for pharmaceuticals.

If you need to visit a doctor or medical centre, show your card at the end of the visit. You will be charged the doctor's fee and the government fee component of that may be processed by the medical centre. If the medical centre is not able to process the government fee, pay the total amount, keep the receipt and you can claim the government fee back from your OSHC provider.

Information on making a claim or renewal of insurance may be obtained from your provider.

Dental and Optical

Dental and optical health services are not covered by your OSHC unless you take out extra cover. If you need to see a dentist or optometrist you will need to make an appointment (see the Yellow Pages) and pay the full fee of this service. Dental and optical health services are not covered by your OSHC unless you take out extra cover. If you need to see a dentist or optometrist you will need to make an appointment (see the Yellow Pages) and pay the full fee of this service.

Managing your Finances:

Initial Expenses

This is an example of some of the expenses you might encounter when you first come to Australia:

Expense	Estimated Cost \$AUD
Temporary accommodation	1,000.00
Rental bond (four weeks rent @ \$200/week)	800.00
Advance rent (two weeks @ \$200/week)	400.00
Electricity connection	200.00
Telephone connection	100.00
Internet connection	100.00
Mobile phone and/or network sim card	50.00
Household items, e.g. furniture, crockery, etc.	1,000.00
Transportation ie bicycle	300.00
Textbooks & Educational Expenses	200.00
Incidentals	100.00
Insurance – house, car, health	500.00
TOTAL:	4,750.00

On-going Expenses

Once you have established yourself in accommodation, you will need to budget for on-going expenses such as rent, food, telephone, gas and/or electricity, transport, health and incidental expenditure.

Setting up a Bank Account

You can choose to open an account in any Bank, Credit Union or Building Society in Australia. Do your research to get the best deal. To open a bank account you will need:

- your passport (with arrival date stamped by Australian immigration)
- student ID card
- money to deposit into the account (this can be as little as \$10)

Anyone who wishes to open a bank account in Australia must show several pieces of personal identification which are allotted a points system. 100 points of identification is required to establish your identity as the person who will be named in the account. Your passport and proof of your arrival date in Australia will be acceptable as 100 points IF you open an account within six weeks of arrival in Australia. After this time you will be required to produce additional documentation. As a student you will be able to open an account with special student benefits. Many banks have 'Student Accounts' which contain no or minimal fees for transactions that might normally be attached to regular savings accounts. You will also require the student ID card from Byron Yoga Centre to prove you are a student and should have access to the benefits offered by a student bank account. For a comparison of accounts in banks throughout Australia see: www.banks.com.au/personal/accounts

Most people in Australia enjoy the convenience of Internet banking and/or telephone banking, which enables them to manage their money, pay bills etc. from home. At the time you are setting up your account you can request these services from your bank. In Jonson Street,

Byron Bay, you will find branches of the following Australian banks:

- National Australia Bank
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia
- ANZ Banking Group
- Westpac Banking Corporation
- Southern Cross Credit Union

Most bank branches are open from Monday to Thursday, 9:00am to 4:00pm and Friday 9.00am to 5pm (except on public holidays). ATMs remain open 24 hours a day. However, you should be aware of your personal safety if accessing cash from an ATM at night in quiet areas where there are not a lot of people around.

Working in Australia: Permission To Work

Applicants granted student visas will automatically receive permission to work with their visa grant. Most student visa holders will no longer need to apply separately in Australia for permission to work. Please note that you will NOT be able to work in Australia until the first official day of classes when the education provider will confirm your study commencement. Byron Yoga Centre will do this automatically on the first official day of classes, or you may request that they do.

Working While Studying

1. You are not permitted to start work until you have commenced your course of study
2. You can work a maximum of 20 hours per week during the term and unlimited hours when your course is not in session.
3. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) considers your course to be 'in session':
 - for the duration of the advertised terms (including periods when exams are being held)
 - if you have completed your studies and your Confirmation of Enrolment is still in effect
 - if you are undertaking another course during a break from your main course and the points will be credited to your main course.

For a full list of mandatory and discretionary student visa conditions please visit www.immi.gov.au/Study/Pages/Study.aspx

Finding Work

You may find it difficult to find work in Australia as you will be joining the general Australian population in your search; therefore you should not rely on income from employment when budgeting to pay for living expenses. There is no guarantee that employment companies will find work for you. Byron Bay has a high rate of unemployment and a high number of overseas travelers looking for part time work. To find a job in Byron Bay try the local newspaper, The Echo: www.echo.net.au

Taxes

Taxes are managed through the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). The tax you pay depends on how much you earn.

Getting a Tax File Number

You must obtain a Tax File Number to be able to work in Australia. A tax file number (TFN) is your unique reference number to our tax system. When you start work, your employer will ask you to complete a tax file number declaration form. If you do not provide a TFN your employment will be taxed at the highest personal income tax rate, which will mean less money in your wages each week.

You can apply for your TFN online at www.ato.gov.au or phone 13 28 61, 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. For the ATO translating and interpreter service phone: 13 14 50.

Taxation Returns

If you pay too much tax you are entitled to a refund. To get a refund you will need to lodge a tax return. You can lodge online using e-tax (free), by mailing a paper tax return, or by paying a registered tax agent to complete and lodge the return for you. If you lodge by e-tax your refund

will normally be issued within 14 days.

- Lodge online using e-tax at www.ato.gov.au
- For a registered tax agent visit www.tabd.gov.au
- Tax returns are lodged at the end of the Australian tax year – (1 July to 30 June).

Superannuation

If your monthly wage is more than AU\$450, your employer must contribute an additional sum equal to 9% of your wage into a superannuation (pension) account for you. In most cases, you can access your contributions when you leave Australia permanently, although the contributions will be taxed.

To check your eligibility to claim your superannuation and to apply for your payment, visit:

www.ato.gov.au/departaustralia

You will need to provide the details of your superannuation fund.

Getting Around Safely

Bus travel in the Byron Bay area is safe. Travelling by bicycle requires that you wear a helmet.

Road Rules

If you are going to drive in Australia, no matter whether you are an experienced driver and have an international drivers' license or not, YOU MUST KNOW THE ROAD RULES before you attempt to drive!

For more information on rules and penalties visit the Roads and Maritime Authority:

www.rms.nsw.gov.au

Many lives are lost on Australian roads every year and international visitors are at high risk! If you come from a country where you drive on the opposite side of the road to Australia it is sometimes helpful to have a companion drive with you to ensure you both take note of traffic conditions and signs until you are more familiar with driving on the left side of the road. A handy tip is not to think of it as the other side of the road, but to think that the "white line" (or centre dividing line on the road) is on your side as the driver, just as it is in all countries. It is recommended that you take one or two driving lessons in Australia before you begin to drive here on your own.

Vehicle Registration and Insurance

Any motor vehicle you own must be registered and insured before you drive it on the road. You must register it in your name and provide the State car registration board with your driver's licence details and your residential address in Australia. Third Party Insurance is compulsory and evidence of insurance must be produced when registering the vehicle.

It is recommended that you have fully comprehensive car insurance if you own a car, this will protect you if you have an accident that is your fault as it will help pay for any damage you may have caused to your car or another car.

Drivers Licence

In New South Wales if you hold a current driver licence from another country, you are allowed to drive on your overseas licence as long as:

- You remain a temporary overseas visitor
- Your overseas licence remains current
- You have not been disqualified from driving in that State or elsewhere and
- You have not had your licence suspended or cancelled or your visiting driver privileges withdrawn.

Most overseas visitors are not required to obtain an Australian licence if you comply with these conditions and can continue to prove your genuine visitor status to the Police if required.

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Adjusting to Life in Australia:

While living and studying abroad may be an exciting adventure, it can also present a range of challenges. Having decided to study and live in Australia you will be undertaking adjustments in many areas of your life including cultural, social and academic. It is also important to remember that while these changes are occurring you will be embarking upon a new period of study (for many of you in a different language) and be away from your usual supports, networks and resources. Adjustment to a new country and culture is a process that occurs gradually and takes time. The values, beliefs, traditions and customs of your home country may vary greatly from those in Australia and adapting to the Australian way of life may take some time.

Be mindful that living away from home can be very confronting at first. Try not to make hasty decisions or discontinue any medications. Be aware of any emotional changes or difficulties that may be occurring and do not hesitate to contact student support at assistant@byronyoga.com or call the office at any time.

This advice may help:

Listen, observe and ask questions

Adjustment to a new culture and way of life takes time. Allow yourself time to observe those around you and patterns of both verbal and non-verbal communication. Don't be afraid to ask questions if there are things you do not understand as this will reduce the chance of confusion or misunderstandings.

Become involved

Make an effort to meet people and become involved in groups both on campus and in the wider community. Maintain an attitude of openness to new situations and experiences. Establishing friendships and joining groups is the best way to experience and learn about Australian culture and will certainly mean you have a richer and more enjoyable time here.

Try to maintain a sense of perspective

When confronted with difficulties remind yourself that living and studying abroad is a challenge and it is normal to feel stressed, overwhelmed and out of your depth at times. Try to recall or make a list of the reasons you initially wanted to study abroad in the first place. Listing positive events or changes within yourself that have occurred since you arrived may also assist with getting things in perspective.

Maintain some of the routines and rituals you may have had in your home country

This can include small things such as continuing to drink a certain type of coffee or tea or eating specific foods. It may also include maintaining involvement in bigger events such as celebrating a national day in your country of origin with a group of friends or finding a cultural group related to your home country for support.

Keep lines of communication open with those at home

Communicating with those at home regularly about your experiences of study and life in Australia, through emails, telephones and letters, is vital. Not only does it help to keep you connected with important social supports, it also assists your friends and family to understand your experiences which will smooth the transition when you return home.

Sense of humour

Importantly, remember that living in a different culture means you will inevitably find yourself in a range of unusual and often confusing situations. Being able to laugh in these situations will remind you that it takes time to understand different cultures and that it is ok to make mistakes.

Ask for help

Don't be afraid to ask Byron Yoga Centre staff for assistance or support if you need it.

Finally, relax and enjoy the journey!

Culture Shock

Culture shock is the feeling of being out of place in an unfamiliar environment. The initial excitement of moving to a new country often subsides when different cultural expectations challenge you to attend to daily responses and behaviours previously taken for granted. The potential stress of dealing with these persistent challenges can result in feelings of hostility and frustration with your host country as well as a profound longing for home.

Overcoming Culture Shock

Once you realise you have culture shock, getting over it and moving on to better adjustment with the host culture will depend on you. It is you who must take some positive steps to feel better, and the sooner you take them, the better!

Recognition

First, you should remember that culture shock is a normal part of your adjustment and that you may have some of the symptoms. Some of your reactions may not be normal for you; you may be more emotional or more sensitive, or lose your sense of humour. Recognising your culture shock symptoms will help you learn about yourself as you work your way through it.

Be objective

Second, try to analyse objectively the differences you are finding between your home and your host country. Look for the reasons your host country does things differently. Remember that host customs and norms are (mostly) logical to them, just as your customs and norms at home are logical to you!

Set goals

Third, set some goals for yourself to redevelop your feeling of control in your life. These should be small tasks that you can accomplish each day. For example, if you do not feel like leaving your room, plan a short activity each day that will get you out. Go to a post office or store to buy something, ride a bus or go to a sports event. If you feel that language is your problem, set daily goals to learn more: study fifteen minutes a day; learn five new words a day; learn one new expression each day; watch a TV program in your new language for 30 minutes. Each goal that you achieve will give you more and more self-confidence that you can cope.

Share your feelings

Fourth, find local friends who are sympathetic and understanding. Talk to them about your feelings and specific situations. They can help you understand ideas from their cultural point of view.

Australian Culture

Greeting People

When meeting someone for the first time, it is usual to shake the person's right hand with your right hand. People who do not know each other generally do not kiss or hug when meeting. When you first meet someone, it is polite not to talk about personal matters.

Many Australians look at the eyes of the people they are talking with. They consider this a sign of respect, and an indication that they are listening. Do not stare at the person for a long time.

You can address a new acquaintance using their title and family name. You may use their first name when they ask you to or use it in the introduction. In the workplace and among friends, most Australians tend to be informal and call each other by their first names.

Clothing Customs

The types of clothing that people wear reflect the diversity in our society just as much as the variation in climate. There are no laws or rules on clothing, but you must wear certain clothing for work situations. Most workplaces have dress standards.

Outside of the work situation, clothing is an individual choice; many people dress for comfort, for the social situation or the weather. Clubs, movie theatres and other places require patrons to be in neat, clean clothes and appropriate footwear.

Many Australians live close to the beach and the sea. On hot days, they may wear little clothing on the beach and surrounds. This does not mean that people who dress to go to the beach or swimming have low moral standards. It means that this is what we accept on and near our beaches.

People from other countries can choose to wear their national dress. They may be religious or customary items and include monks' robe, a burqa, a hijab or a turban. As a tolerant society with people from many different cultures, clothing is a part of cultural beliefs and practices that is encouraged.

Polite Behaviour

'Please' and 'thank you' are words that are very helpful when dealing with other people, and buying goods or services. When asked if you would like something, like a cup of tea, it is polite to say, 'Yes please', or just 'please' if you would like it, or 'no, thank you' if you do not. When you receive something, it is polite to thank the person by saying 'thank you'. Australians tend to think that people who do not say 'please' or 'thank you' are being rude. Using these words will help in building a good relationship.

Sometimes a sensitive issue may come up in conversation. Not to talk may seem rude. It is more polite to say 'sorry, it is too hard to explain' than to ignore a question.

Australians often say, 'Excuse me' to get a person's attention and 'sorry' if we bump into them. We also say, 'Excuse me' or 'pardon me' if we burp or belch in public or a person's home.

You should always try to be on time for meetings and other visits. If you realise you are going to be late, try to contact the person to let them know. This is very important for visits to professionals as you may be charged money for being late or if you miss the appointment without notifying them before the appointment time.

Most Australians blow their noses into a handkerchief or tissue, not onto the footpath. This is also true for spitting. Many people will also say, 'Bless you' when you sneeze. This phrase has no religious intent.

Australian Slang

Much common word usage or 'slang' may seem strange to people new to Australia. Slang words start from many different sources. Some words are shortened versions of longer words. Many were expressions already used by migrants who came from the north of England. If you are unsure what an expression means, it is all right to ask the person who said it to explain. Some common expressions are:

- Bring a plate - when you are invited to a party and asked to 'bring a plate', this means to bring a dish of food to share with your host and other guests. Take the food to the party in any type of dish, not just a plate, and it is usually ready to serve. This is common for communal gatherings such as for school, work or a club. If you are unsure what to bring, you can ask the host.
- BYO - when an invitation to a party says 'BYO', this means 'bring your own' drink. If you do not drink alcohol, it is acceptable to bring juice, soft drink or soda, or water. Some restaurants are BYO. You can bring your own wine to these, although there is usually a charge for providing and cleaning glasses called 'corkage'.
- Arvo - This is short for afternoon. 'Drop by this arvo,' means please come and visit this afternoon.
- Fortnight - This term describes a period of two weeks.
- Barbeque, BBQ, barbie - outdoor cooking, usually of meat or seafood over a grill or hotplate using gas or coals. The host serves the meat with salads and bread rolls. It is common for a guest, when invited to a BBQ, to ask if they should bring anything.
- Snag - The raw type sausages usually cooked at a BBQ. They can be made of pork, beef or chicken.
- Chook - The term chook means a chicken, usually a hen.
- Cuppa - a cup of tea or coffee 'Drop by this arvo for a cuppa' means please come and visit this afternoon for a cup of tea or coffee.
- Loo or dunny - These are slang terms for toilet. If you are a guest in someone's house for the first time, it is usually polite to ask permission to use his or her toilet. 'May I

- use your toilet please?' Some people ask, 'Where's the loo?'
- Fair dinkum - honest, the truth. 'Fair dinkum?' when used as a question means, 'is it really true?'
- To be crook – to be sick or ill.
- Flat out - busy.
- Shout - to buy someone a drink. At a bar or a pub when a group of friends meet, it is common for each person to 'shout a round', meaning buy everybody a drink. Each person takes a turn at buying a 'round'. It is also acceptable to say that you do not drink (alcohol) by saying that you are a 'teetotaler'. This also means you are not obliged to shout.
- Bloke - a man. Sometimes if you ask for help, you may get an answer to 'see that bloke over there'.
- How ya goin? 'How are you going?' means how are you, or how do you do? It does not mean what form of transport you are taking. Sometimes it can sound like 'ow-ya-goin-mate'.

For more information on Australian slang visit:

www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/slang

Tipping

Tipping is not generally expected or practiced in Australia. This is because throughout Australia, service industry staff are covered by minimum wage laws and therefore do not rely on tips for their income. However, it is acceptable to leave a small amount (perhaps 10%) should you feel you have received exceptional service.

Public Holidays & Special Celebrations:

Australians hold certain days each year as special days of national meaning. We may recognise the day with a holiday for everyone or we can celebrate the day as a nation with special events. Most States and Territories observe some of the public holidays on the same date. They have others on different dates or have some days that only their State or Territory celebrates. In larger cities, most shops, restaurants and public transport continue to operate on public holidays. In smaller towns, most shops and restaurants close. However, as Byron Bay is a major tourist destination, many venues remain open for business.

New Year

Australians love to celebrate New Year, January 1. There are festivals, celebrations and parties all over the country to welcome in the New Year. Sydney Harbour and Sydney Harbour Bridge have become synonymous with New Year celebrations in Australia the fireworks display is considered to be one of the best in the world. January 1 is a public holiday.

Australia Day

Australia Day, January 26, is the day we as a people and place celebrate our nationhood. The day is a public holiday. The day marks the founding of the first settlement in our nation by European people.

Easter

Easter is the most significant event of the Christian calendar.

In addition to its religious significance, Easter in Australia is enjoyed as a four-day holiday weekend starting on Good Friday and ending on Easter Monday. This extra-long weekend is an opportunity for Australians to take a mini-holiday, or get together with family and friends. Easter often coincides with school holidays, so many people with school aged children incorporate Easter into a longer family holiday. Easter is the busiest time for domestic air travel in Australia, and a very popular time for gatherings such as weddings and christenings.

Anzac Day

Anzac Day is on April 25 the day the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed at Gallipoli in Turkey in 1915 during World War 1. This day is set apart to hold dear the memory of those who fought for our nation and those who lost their life to war. The day is a public holiday.

Labor Day

Labor Day is celebrated on different dates throughout Australia, in New South Wales it is celebrated on the first Monday in October. As elsewhere in the world, Labor Day originated in Australia as a means of giving 'working people' a day off and recognising the roots of trade unionist movements and workers' rights.

Queen's Birthday

The Queen's Birthday holiday celebrates the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II who is not only Queen of the United Kingdom but also Queen of Australia, where the Queen's Birthday is a public holiday celebrated on a Monday but on different dates. Having the Queen's Birthday on a Monday, results in a three-day long weekend.

Christmas

Christmas is celebrated in Australia on 25 December. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that Jesus is 'the son of God', the Messiah sent from Heaven to save the world. On Christmas Day family and friends gather to exchange gifts and enjoy special Christmas food. Australians are as likely to eat freshly caught seafood outdoors at a barbeque, as to have a traditional roast dinner around a dining table. Many Australians spend Christmas out of doors, going to the beach for the day, or heading to camping grounds for a longer break over the Christmas holiday period. There are places which have developed an international reputation for overseas visitors to spend Christmas Day in Australia, such as Bondi Beach in Sydney.

Sun Safety:

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. In fact, one in every two Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer at some point during their lifetime. The good news is; it can be prevented. By minimising your exposure to the sun's damaging ultraviolet radiation (UVR), you can protect your skin and prevent the development of skin cancer.

Skin cancer and skin damage are caused by being exposed to the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation (UVR). The key to preventing skin cancer is to protect your skin from the sun by practising sun safe behaviours; stay out of the sun between 10am and 3pm; wear protective clothing, sunglasses and a hat; and use sunscreen.

Beach Safety:

The ocean around Byron Bay can be dangerous, with strong currents and rips. A rip is a strong current running out to sea. Rips are the cause of most rescues performed at beaches. A rip usually occurs when a channel forms between the shore and a sandbar, and large waves have built up water which then returns to sea, causing a drag effect. The larger the surf the stronger the rip. Rips are dangerous as they can carry a weak or tired swimmer out into deep water.

Remember the **F-L-A-G-S** and Stay Safe:

F Find the flags and swim between them - the red and yellow flags mark the safest place to swim at the beach.

L Look at the safety signs - they help you identify potential dangers and daily conditions at the beach.

A Ask a surf lifesaver for some good advice - surf conditions can change quickly so talk to a surf lifesaver or lifeguard before entering the water.

G Get a friend to swim with you - so you can look out for each other's safety and get help if needed.

S Stick your hand up for help - if you get into trouble in the water, stay calm, and raise your arm to signal for help. Float with a current or rip - don't try and swim against it.

Never swim at night; under the influence of alcohol or directly after a meal. Never run and dive into the water.

Bush & Outback Safety

Australia has many extraordinary and beautiful places to explore. If you are going on a trip, travel with other people, make sure someone knows where you are at all times and stay on a road or a walking track.

In the Bush

Be prepared if you plan some time in our bushland. Plan your hike. Always tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to return. Let them know when you return safely. Check the weather forecast and be prepared for unexpected changes in weather. When walking or exploring outdoors drink plenty of water (allow at least one litre of water per hour of walking). Wear sturdy shoes and socks, a hat, sunscreen lotion, comfortable clothing and insect repellent. Other handy items for long bushwalks include food, warm clothing, first aid supplies, a torch and a map. Never walk alone. Read maps and signs carefully. Stay on the track and stay behind safety barriers. Never dive into a rock-pool, creek, lake or river. Stay away from cliff edges and waterfalls. Do not feed or play with native animals. You might get bitten or scratched. Limit your use of fire. Use a fuel stove for cooking and wear thermal clothing to keep warm. Never leave fires unattended or unconfined. Visit the ranger station or park information centre to obtain details on the best places to visit and any additional safety tips for that park. For more information, visit www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

Dangerous Animals & Plants:

Australia is home to a variety of native animals. Even if they seem friendly to you, do not touch or feed them - they are not used to close contact with humans and may hurt you. If you are visiting any of Australia's beautiful parks or forests be wary of animals in their natural habitat, do not try to touch them or feed them.

Bites and Stings

The majority of insects in Australia are not harmful to humans. Some insects bite and sting if they are threatened so it is best to avoid touching them if you want to avoid being stung or bitten.

In case of allergic reaction, call the Poisons Information Centre on: 131 126.