



## **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](http://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](mailto: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 Border Protection**

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](http://blanchs.com.au) (02) 6686 2144

Brunswick Valley Coaches: [brunswickvalleycoaches.com.au](http://brunswickvalleycoaches.com.au) (02) 6680 1566

Byron Taxis: [byronbaytaxi.com.au](http://byronbaytaxi.com.au) 131008

**Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre:**  
16 Carrington Street, Lismore (02) 6621 1000  
**Overseas Student Ombudsman:**  
<http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

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](http://www.whitepages.com.au) and [www.yellowpages.com.au](http://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:**

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

### **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](http://www.about-australia.com)

[www.tourism.australia.com](http://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.

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](http://www.byronbay.com)

[www.echo.net.au](http://www.echo.net.au)

[www.byronbaynow.com](http://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](mailto: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 better to submit an application with the assistance of an accredited agent due 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](http://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](http://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):

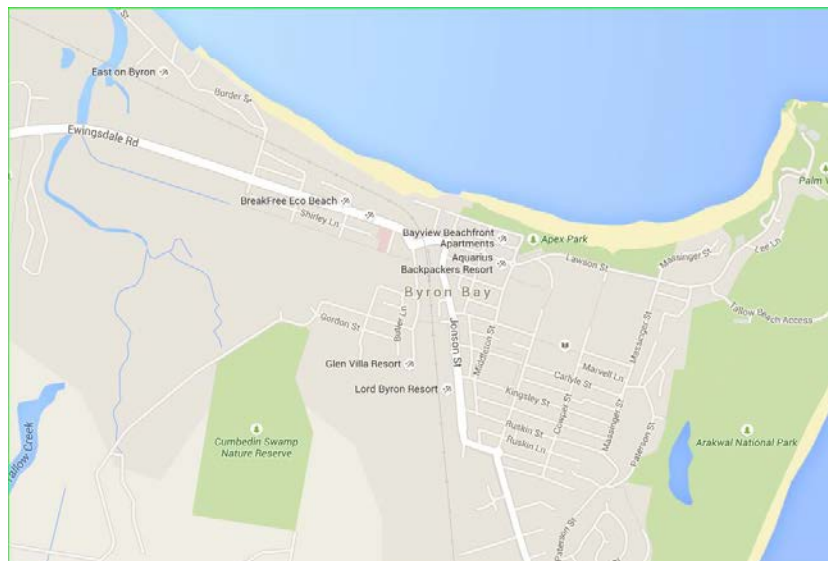
- Complete the course within the duration specified in the CoE
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress
- Maintain approved Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) while in Australia
- Remain with the principal education provider for 6 calendar months, unless issued a letter of release from the provider 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.byronbayshuttle.com.au) (02) 6685 7447
- [www.greyhound.com.au](http://www.greyhound.com.au)
- [www.brisbane2byron.com](http://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](http://www.echo.net.au/classified-ads)

[www.airbnb.com.au/ByronBay](http://www.airbnb.com.au/ByronBay)

[www.flatmates.com.au/2481/byron-bay](http://www.flatmates.com.au/2481/byron-bay)

<https://www.gumtree.com.au/s-flatshare-houseshare/nsw/c1829413008839>

Local Real Estate Agents who manage rental accommodation are:

Ray White: [www.rwbyronbay.com](http://www.rwbyronbay.com)

First National: [www.byronbayfn.com.au](http://www.byronbayfn.com.au)

Raine & Horne: [www.raineandhorne.com.au/byronbay](http://www.raineandhorne.com.au/byronbay)

L J Hooker: [www.ljhooker.com.au](http://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](http://www.hostelworld.com/Byron_Bay)

[www.byron-bay.com/hostel/](http://www.byron-bay.com/hostel/)

[www.nomadsworld.com](http://www.nomadsworld.com) (very close to Byron Yoga Retreat Centre)

[www.aquarius-backpackers.com.au](http://www.aquarius-backpackers.com.au)

[www.backpackersinnbyronbay.com.au](http://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](http://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](http://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/](http://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](http://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](http://www.medibank.com.au)
- OSHC Worldcare: [www.oshcworldcare.com.au](http://www.oshcworldcare.com.au)
- BUPA OSHC: [www.overseasstudenthealth.com](http://www.overseasstudenthealth.com)
- Australian Health Management: [www.ahm.com.au](http://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](http://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:

<b>Expense</b>	<b>Estimated Cost \$AUD</b>
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
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>4,750.00</b>

### **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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.ato.gov.au)
- For a registered tax agent visit [www.tabd.gov.au](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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.

Please read - Important Information Regarding Your Training. International Student Obligations, policies and procedures).

Once a student has reviewed the information that pertains to their chosen path of study, they are to complete the Enrolment Form (and other applicable application documents) and return it to the Administration Department of the RTO.

Byron Yoga Centre will review the application for completeness and make a decision on how to proceed.

If the application is approved:

1. The student will be notified within 15 days of the receipt of their application.
2. The student will be provided with a Letter of Offer and an Acceptance of Offer.

3. The student is to sign the Acceptance of Offer and return it to the RTO within 10 days of receiving it.
4. Once the Acceptance of Offer is received by the RTO, Byron Yoga Centre will provide the Student with a Confirmation of Enrolment generated through the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS).
5. The student's upfront fees will be calculated and the student will be invoiced.
6. Once the student has paid their upfront fees, a Student File will be opened for them and their details will be entered on the Learner Management System (LMS). The RTO Administration Department should ensure that all other necessary documents and information have been collected from the student using the Enrolment Document Checklist.
7. Students will be asked to complete a Special Needs Form during the enrolment process. The RTO may also choose to implement other procedures to help determine the level of numeracy and literacy of each potential student. Both of these procedures contribute to ensuring that the RTO is able to assist students it identifies in extra need and support with the most appropriate resources.
8. The student will then receive a copy of their Learning and Assessment material in preparation for their studies. These documents will be the responsibility of the student for the duration of the course. Any lost material that needs replacing may incur a replacement fee.
9. On the commencement of training, the student will be provided with further information about the college and its operating policies and procedures before proceeding.
10. Once the student and trainer are satisfied that there are no further outstanding queries or information to be covered, training will commence.

If the application is denied:

1. The student will be notified within 15 days of the receipt of their application.
2. The notification will be in writing and will outline the reasons behind the decision.
3. Students will be provided with a copy of the Complaints, Grievances and Appeals policy and procedure for International Students.

All applicants who are successfully admitted entry into a course offered by Byron Yoga Centre and who are granted a Student Visa will be required to participate in an Orientation Program hosted by the RTO. This program helps to familiarise new students with Byron Yoga Centre and with Australia in particular.

**Enrolment may be Deferred, Suspended or Cancelled:**

Students who wish to defer their studies must apply to Byron Yoga Centre in writing. Deferment is considered when a student wishes to halt their studies for a period more than 2 weeks. Students must have evidence to support their request for a deferment. For example, where a student requires a deferment due to medical illness, it is expected that a valid, signed medical certificate will be provided as evidence. Students are to be advised that Deferments and Suspensions are only granted under very special circumstances, usually involving compassionate and compelling reasons.

Further information describing what circumstances would be considered for the potential approval of a deferment can be found below:

International students may defer studies at Byron Yoga Centre when significant personal circumstances have interfered, or threaten to interfere, with the educational process. These significant personal circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- a. The health and physical well-being of the student or their spouse or family members, whether residing in Australia, in the student's country of origin, or in a third country.
- b. The economic well-being of the student and/or their spouse or family members, whether residing in Australia, in the student's country of origin, or in a third country.
- c. Changes to the personal freedom and social well-being, whether actual or threatened, that are brought about by legal, criminal, or political processes and which have a direct affect upon the student, the student's spouse or family members, whether residing in Australia, in the student's country of origin, or in a third country.

Byron Yoga Centre will evaluate the evidence provided and reserves the right to determine the suitability of that which is provided.

Once Byron Yoga Centre has the application and the required evidence, the RTO Chief Executive Officer will decide whether or not to grant the student the requested deferment. Items that the Chief Executive Officer will take into consideration include, amongst other things:

- The student's academic progress to date;
- The student's attendance records to date;

The student will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application and will be asked to sign their agreement to any conditions placed on the request being granted and their understanding of their overall obligations. This may include a revised Confirmation of Enrolment being issued to the student.

Should a request be denied, the student may access Byron Yoga Centre Complaints and Grievances Policy for International Students and follow the guidelines outlined in this document.



Where a student chooses to temporarily suspend their studies (usually 2 weeks or less), the same steps and principles listed above will apply. However, Byron Yoga Centre will take extra steps to determine whether the suspension period requested would still enable the student to continue to complete their course within the timeframe of their original Confirmation of Enrolment, with extra support if required. Byron Yoga Centre will again take into consideration the student's academic progress and attendance to date.

Byron Yoga Centre may choose to suspend a student's enrolment under the following circumstances:

- a. The student is disruptive on site and in class, evidenced by 2 or more complaints from fellow students and trainers/assessors;
- b. The student is the subject of complaints from the wider Australian community (evidenced by 2 or more complaints);
- c. The student causes minor (less than \$500) damage to the property of Byron Yoga Centre or is involved in inciting others to do so.

Byron Yoga Centre may choose to cancel a student's enrolment under the following circumstances:

- a. Academic Misconduct - defined as attempts by students to cheat, plagiarise or otherwise act dishonestly in undertaking an assessment task, or assisting other students to do so. Students are considered guilty of cheating if they seek to gain advantage by unfair means such as copying another student's work, or in any way mislead a trainer/assessor about their knowledge, ability, or the amount of original work they have done.
- b. The student fails to pay the required fees, or abide by any other conditions, as stipulated in their agreement with Byron Yoga Centre;
- c. The student is the subject of an investigation by the Australian Police Force;
- d. The student steals or causes significant damage (more than \$500) to the property of Byron Yoga Centre or is involved in inciting others to do so.

Student's involved in the stealing or damage to Byron Yoga Centre property will be charged accordingly.

Where Byron Yoga Centre has chosen to suspend or cancel a student's enrolment, the student will be informed in writing and the 20 day appeal period will apply.

## Access and Equity

### What do the terms "Access" and "Equity" mean?

*Access* generally refers to the ability to enter training. Improving access might include improving physical access to a training venue or ensuring that selection criteria do not discriminate against clients.

*Equity* in this context means equality of access to, and potentially equal outcomes from training regardless of the individual's circumstances, background and identity.

Byron Yoga Centre is of the firm belief that every individual regardless of personal history, present circumstances or any other factor that can commonly be considered as an inhibiting factor to self-development, should be provided the opportunity to improve their life through further education. Byron Yoga Centre embraces multiculturalism and diversity in Australia, and is pleased to be a contributor to quality education as a whole.

Access and equity issues are addressed during staff induction and during staff meetings and professional development activities. Access and equity are addressed within Byron Yoga Centre Code of Practice. The Code of Practice is openly communicated to all training participants and training and assessment staff.

Byron Yoga Centre endeavours to eliminate discrimination against persons on the ground of:

- Sex
- Marital status or pregnancy
- Family responsibility or family status
- Race
- Religious or political conviction
- Impairment
- Age

This Access and Equity Policy will be made available to students and potential students through the Student Handbook available on our website and in hardcopy.

## **Procedure**

Potential students seeking to enrol with Byron Yoga Centre will be assessed for entry to study through the same published entry requirements and through the same process, regardless of their background, circumstances or eligibility for funding. Entry requirements for each of our courses are published on our website, while general information about enrolment can be found within the Enrolment Policy and Procedure.

Upon enrolment, all students will be requested to complete a Special Needs Form. Prior to the commencement of training, all participants will have the opportunity to discuss any specific learning needs with their facilitators/assessors. Students will be asked during their welcome to the

course to raise any access and equity issues they may face with the administration staff of Byron Yoga Centre. Further steps are listed below:

1. Students may be asked to complete a short Literacy and Numeracy test to identify any potential areas of difficulty that they may have, or any skill gaps that may need to be addressed;
2. Information received from this test will be analysed by the facilitator. Students identified as being in need of help will be contacted by the facilitator. Privacy and Confidentiality will be discussed with the student;
3. The Facilitators will discuss with participants at the commencement of each training session or course, the topic of Access and Equity. The Facilitator will request that any outstanding Special Needs forms be submitted to the Administration Department of the RTO;
4. Any unresolved queries relating to access/equity issues will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer (for instance, if they cannot be resolved by the Facilitator);
5. The Chief Executive Officer will then contact the participant to discuss their access/equity issue and make appropriate arrangements which may include notifying the training venue, arranging a meeting with the participant and the Facilitator, arranging extra assistance from the Facilitator or external assistance as required;
6. File notes will be made of the action taken in each case where access/equity assistance is required and the outcome recorded for the participant.

Access and Equity issues are not only addressed in terms of the services offered by Byron Yoga Centre, but also in terms of its own employment principles and in terms of addressing the wellbeing of all staff.

In addition to eliminating potential discrimination on the previously listed points, Byron Yoga Centre also takes a very firm stance on Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying. Byron Yoga Centre follows guidelines available by Fair Work Australia and WorkCover on these issues.

Should it come to light that harassment in any form is occurring in the workplace, Byron Yoga Centre will endeavour to end the situation as soon as possible. The following steps will be taken.

- The employee who is felt to be discriminated against is advised to confide in a trusted mentor or friend about the situation;
- The employee is encouraged to discuss the situation with their immediate supervisor or manager. If either of these is in fact the person involved in the harassment or discriminatory behaviour, the employee is to seek the next line of management and discuss the situation at hand.
- An investigation will be completed by the nominated manager and a resolution sought in which all parties can agree. All notes and documents associated with the incident will be kept under the strictest confidence;

- A schedule will be put in place to monitor the situation and wellbeing of the affected employees;
- Where no resolution can be determined by the nominated Manager, the Chief Executive Officer will become involved;
- A review of the information provided will be undertaken and further investigation completed as required. A resolution will be sought in which all parties can agree. All notes and documents associated with the incident will be kept under the strictest confidence;
- Where appropriate, disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment will be considered.
- Where it has been found that an employee's personal and human rights have been severely impacted, Byron Yoga Centre will endeavour to support that employee in seeking external resolution and compensation as they choose;
- If at any point, the victimised employee feels that their needs in this regard are not being suitably catered for by Byron Yoga Centre, they will be directed to seek support from external authorities that govern fair work practice in Australia.

### Monitoring Attendance - International Students

Byron Yoga Centre will systematically monitor students' compliance with student visa conditions relating to attendance. Trainers will mark an Attendance Sheet at each class.

The nominated RTO administration assistant will follow up student attendance at the close of each study day.

Arriving to class late three (3) times will equal one (1) absence.

After three (3) unexcused absences a Warning Letter will be sent to the student reminding the student of responsibilities and consequences of failure to maintain attendance and satisfactory progress. The letter will include details of counselling available relating to both learning skills and personal issues which may be affecting study.

Where the student has been absent for five (5) consecutive scheduled study days the nominated RTO administration assistant will notify the RTO Chief Executive Officer and send an email or letter advising the student to contact Byron Yoga Centre immediately or it will be assumed that they are no longer studying.

If a response has not been received within seven (7) days of the sent date of the letter, and all other means of contacting the student have failed, the student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) will be cancelled accordingly.

Students who have failed to attend at least 80% of classes at the end of the first study period will be subject to an Intervention Strategy to assist them meet course progress. Students will be required to make an appointment with the RTO Chief Executive Officer, who will design an Intervention Strategy to be agreed to by the student in question. The Strategy may include activities such as extra lessons with trainers, implementation of a mentoring system or formal counselling as required.

The intervention strategy must be explained and the student must indicate whether or not they agree to abide by the terms. All parties, including the student must sign the intervention strategy. The document will be placed in the student's file. At the time that the intervention strategy is agreed to, the student will be made aware that further unsatisfactory attendance will lead to the student being reported to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) which may lead to the cancellation of his/her visa, depending on the outcome of any appeals. A record of all intervention measures implemented and all relevant documentation will be kept in the students file.

Should an International Student for a second compulsory study period miss five (5) consecutive study days or fall below the 80% attendance requirement, Byron Yoga Centre will notify the student of their intention to report them via the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) and provide the student with an opportunity to appeal (20 day period).

Immediately following the 20 working days where the student has not submitted a request to appeal or after the appeals process is completed and the original decision stands, the student will be reported to DIBP via PRISMS with the approval of the RTO CEO. Byron Yoga Centre will report the student within five (5) working days of finalising the decision to report.

Byron Yoga Centre may decide not to report a student for breaching their attendance requirements if it deems that the student is clearly and without question, meeting satisfactory course progress. This includes passing all units in a study semester. Byron Yoga Centre may question its trainers for further evidence regarding a student's progress and use this as part of its decision making process. The decision not to report a student for breaching attendance requirements sits solely with Byron Yoga Centre.

***Note: In the event that a student's enrolment is suspended, the period of suspension of enrolment (as entered in PRISMS) will not be calculated in the attendance monitoring calculations.***

## Monitoring Course Progress - International Students

### Academic Progress

The progression of students through courses in which they are enrolled to achieve the consequent awards in the required time is a desirable goal and a key indicator of the quality of an educational institution. Notwithstanding, some students will have difficulty with various units and on occasion receive a fail grade. While the occasional fail will slow progress towards completion of an award, it hopefully indicates difficulty in only one aspect of a course that may be balanced by ability in another.

However, if the student has failed a number of units, it is necessary for Byron Yoga Centre to exercise its duty of care towards the student by attempting to help them to explore the options available to them so as to prevent the incurring of significant costs and not meeting the original timeframe of their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).

Byron Yoga Centre is obliged to comply with the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 (The National Code 2007) and the ESOS Act 2000. Standard 10 of the National Code mandates monitoring of course progress by international students.

#### **Standard 10 - Monitoring course progress**

*Registered providers systematically monitor students' course progress. Registered providers are proactive in notifying and counselling students who are at risk of failing to meet course progress requirements. Registered providers report students, under section 19 of the ESOS Act, who have breached the course progress requirements.*

10.1 The registered provider must monitor, record and assess the course progress of each student for each unit of the course for which the student is enrolled in accordance with the registered provider's documented course progress policies and procedures.

10.2 The registered provider must have and implement appropriate documented course progress policies and procedures for each course, which must be provided to staff and students, that specify the:

- Requirements for achieving satisfactory course progress
- Process for assessing satisfactory course progress
- Procedure for intervention for students at risk of failing to achieve satisfactory course progress
- Process for determining the point at which the student has failed to meet satisfactory course progress, and
- Procedure for notifying students that they have failed to meet satisfactory course progress requirements.

10.3 The registered provider must assess the course progress of the student in accordance with the registered provider's course progress policies and procedures at the end point of every study period.

10.4 The registered provider must have a documented intervention strategy, which must be made available to staff and students, that specifies the procedures for identifying and assisting students at risk of not meeting the course progress requirements. The strategy must specify:

- Procedures for contacting and counselling identified students
- Strategies to assist identified students to achieve satisfactory course progress, and
- The process by which the intervention strategy is activated.

10.5 The registered provider must implement the intervention strategy for any student who is at risk of not meeting satisfactory course progress requirements. At a minimum, the intervention strategy must be activated where the student has failed or is deemed not yet competent in 50% or more of the units attempted in any study period.

10.6 Where the registered provider has assessed the student as not achieving satisfactory course progress, the registered provider must notify the student in writing of its intention to report the student for not achieving satisfactory course progress. The written notice must inform the student that he or she is able to access the registered provider's complaints and appeals process as per Standard 8 (Complaints and appeals) and that the student has 20 working days in which to do so.

10.7 Where the student has chosen not to access the complaints and appeals processes within the 20 working day period, withdraws from the process, or the process is completed and results in a decision supporting the registered provider, the registered provider must notify the Department of Education through PRISMS of the student not achieving satisfactory course progress as soon as practicable.

<https://www.aei.gov.au/Regulatory-Information/Education-Services-for-Overseas-Students-ESOS-Legislative-Framework/National-Code/nationalcodepartd/Pages/ExplanatoryguideD10.aspx>

Progression of students in their enrolled course of study will be evaluated during the processing of unit results normally occurring at the end of each study period. However, during semester, students with two events such as the late submission of an assignment or failure of an assignment/assessment shall be deemed "at risk" and be sent an appropriate warning letter.

The Progression Rules against which the academic progress of students in a course shall be evaluated are as follows:

A. At least two late assignments or two failed assignments/assessments

- B. Passing more than 50% of enrolled units in a study period;
- C. Failing at least 50% of the enrolled units in a study period;

The following circumstances will lead to the application of the outcomes in accordance with the Byron Yoga Centre progression rules:

1. The progression of any student who complies with Progression Rule "A" in a study period will be assessed as marginal and the student declared "at risk" and the student warned of the implication of continuing such behaviour.
2. The progression of a student who complies with Progression Rule "B" will be assessed as satisfactory and the student declared "in good standing".
3. The progression of any student who complies with Progression Rule "C" in a study period will be declared in need of intervention, with the student and Byron Yoga Centre to define and implement a strategy that will meet the student's needs and assist them in meeting course progress requirements.
4. Where the progression of an international student complies with Progression Rule "C" for a second consecutive study period, Byron Yoga Centre shall inform the student of its intention to report the student to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

### **Completion Within the Expected Duration of Study**

Standard 9 of the National Code mandates completion by an international student of their course of study within the expected duration of study.

#### **Standard 9 - Completion within the expected duration of study**

*Registered providers monitor the enrolment load of students to ensure they complete the course within the duration specified in their CoE and do not exceed the allowable portion of online or distance learning. Registered providers only enable students to extend the expected duration of study for the course through the issuing of a new CoE in limited circumstances.*

9.1 The registered provider must have and implement documented policies and procedures for monitoring the progress of each student to ensure that at all times the student is in a position to complete the course within the expected duration as specified on the student's CoE. In monitoring this enrolment load, the registered provider must ensure that in each compulsory study period for a course, the student is studying at least one unit that is not by distance or online learning.

9.2 The registered provider may only extend the duration of the student's study where it is clear that the student will not complete the



course within the expected duration, as specified on the student's CoE, as the result of:

- a. compassionate or compelling circumstances (e.g. illness where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes or where the registered provider was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit)
- b. the registered provider implementing its intervention strategy for students who were at risk of not meeting satisfactory course progress, or
- c. an approved deferment or suspension of study has been granted under Standard 13.

9.3 Where there is a variation in the student's enrolment load which may affect the student's expected duration of study in accordance with 9.2, the registered provider is to record this variation and the reasons for it on the student file. The registered provider must correctly report the student via PRISMS and/or issue a new CoE when the student can only account for the variation/s by extending his or her expected duration of study.

9.4 The registered provider may allow the student to undertake no more than 25 per cent of the student's total course by distance and/or online learning. However, the registered provider must not enrol the student exclusively in distance or online learning units in any compulsory study period.

9.5 Except in the circumstances specified in 9.2, the expected duration of study specified in the student's CoE must not exceed the CRICOS registered course duration.

The Department of Education has prepared an extensive explanatory guide in order to assist providers with the implementation of the National Code 2007. The Explanatory Guide can be found at the following link:

<https://www.aei.gov.au/Regulatory-Information/Education-Services-for-Overseas-Students-ESOS-Legislative-Framework/National-Code/nationalcodepartd/Pages/ExplanatoryguideD9.aspx>

The Standard 9 Explanatory Guide offers the following advice in relation to the workload required of international students:

**QUESTION:** Can a provider allow a student to study less than what was previously considered a 'full-time' load?

**ANSWER:** Yes, a provider can allow a student to enrol in less than a 'full-time' load in any study period if:

- There are compassionate or compelling reasons for reducing the load;
- The reduced load is part of the provider's intervention strategy;
- The student has studied, or plans to study, extra units in another study period;

- The student has only a few units left to complete and these do not constitute a full-time load;
- Pre-requisite units are not available in that study period.

The National Code 2007 has moved away from the concept of full-time to focus on a student completing within the expected duration of the course. As a result, the National Code 2007 offers greater flexibility to manage a students' work load. It allows students to spread their workload over more teaching periods, where a provider offers non-compulsory study periods, or to reduce their workload if they are having trouble adjusting.

This allows a student's enrolment load to fluctuate during the course. However, the provider must ensure the student follows an enrolment pattern that will allow the student to finish within the expected duration in the normal course of events.

**Note:**

By studying less than what used to be considered a 'full-time' load, a student is at risk of not completing the course within the expected duration as specified on the student's COE. This may require the student to catch up by studying subjects during a non-compulsory study period or by overloading in some compulsory study periods to compensate for those study periods in which the student was studying a reduced load. Alternatively, a provider may extend the duration of the student's study as a result of the circumstances listed in Standard 9.2.

Byron Yoga Centre is obliged to monitor the enrolment load of international students to ensure that at all times they are in a position to complete their course within the duration on each student's COE, usually the normal duration of the course.

Before the commencement of study and each study period the International Student Liaison Officer shall negotiate/confirm with each international student a program of study designed to complete the student's course within the period specified on the student's COE.

Course Pathway Advisors will ensure that students will be provided with responsible guidance as to course requirements for each semester, including details of the assessment requirements within each unit.

In discussion with the International Student Liaison Officer before the commencement of each study period, the student may request a variation of the agreed program of study (in writing) which may extend the period of study beyond the expected duration only on the grounds of:

- Compassionate and compelling circumstances; or
- Approved deferment or suspension of study.

The International Student Liaison Officer shall record approval of such a request on the student's file, along with the reasons for the approval.

If, during a study period, the student has reason to vary their enrolment due to compassionate and compelling circumstances, the student may apply in writing for the details of their enrolment to be altered accordingly. The International Student Liaison Officer shall record this approval on the student's file along with the reasons for the approval and advise the CEO of this action.

At the beginning of the student's penultimate study period, if it has been determined the student is unable to complete by the end of the next study period, the International Student Liaison Officer may request of the CEO the extension of the student's enrolment and the issue of a new COE should the student meet the requirements of compassionate and compelling circumstances.

Byron Yoga Centre will not allow international students to undertake more than 25% of their total course by distance and/or online learning. Byron Yoga Centre will not enrol an international student exclusively in distance or online learning units in any compulsory study period.

### Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances

In order for a student to establish compassionate and compelling circumstances they must provide proof of these circumstances. The evidence will be reviewed and a decision made at the discretion of Byron Yoga Centre.

**Definition:** Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student, when they have an impact on the student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include:

- Serious medical condition or injury
- Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents.
- Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring their immediate travel
- A traumatic experience which could include but is not limited to:
  - Involvement in or witnessing of an accident or
  - A crime committed against the student or
  - The student has been a witness to a crime and this has impacted on the student.

### **Guidelines for Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances**

Medical certificates provided as evidence must:

- Be issued by a registered doctor and include the Doctor's contact details
- State that the student has a medical condition and is unfit for study
- State the length of time the student will be unfit for study

Death certificates provided as evidence must be certified and translated into English.

Evidence of a major political upheaval or natural disaster must be within reasonable proximity to the student's family and will be investigated by the RTO.

Evidence of a traumatic experience must include a police report or psychologist's report/letter or a report/letter issued by a suitably qualified professional.

#### Transferring Between Providers (International Students)

Byron Yoga Centre must meet obligations contained within Standard 7 of the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007* (The National Code 2007) in relation to students seeking to transfer between providers of educational services.

#### Definitions:

**Principal course:** The principal course of study refers to the main course of study to be undertaken by an International Student where a student visa has been issued for multiple courses of study. The principal course of study would normally be the final course of study where the International Student arrives in Australia with a student visa that covers multiple courses.

**PRISMS:** Provider Registration and International Student Management System

#### Prospective students seeking to transfer to Byron Yoga Centre from another provider

Byron Yoga Centre will not enrol a student wishing to transfer from another registered provider's course prior to the student completing a minimum of six months of that principal course except where:

- 1) The original provider has ceased to be registered;
- 2) The course in which the student is enrolled has ceased to be registered;
- 3) The original provider has provided a written letter of release;
- 4) The original provider has had a sanction imposed on its registration that prevents the student from continuing his or her course;
- 5) Any government sponsor of the student considers the change to be in the student's best interest and has provided written support for that change.

Where a student enrolled with another registered provider of educational services requests to be enrolled with Byron Yoga Centre prior to completing six months of their principal course, has met all of the necessary entry requirements and one or more of eligibility criteria listed above, that student shall:

- 1) Receive a formal Offer of Admission letter from Byron Yoga Centre;
- 2) Receive supplementary information around their chosen course, Byron Yoga Centre policies and procedures and refunding of course fees;
- 3) Be asked to produce a Letter of Release from the previous provider;
- 4) Present the Letter of Release together with the completed Acceptance of Offer of Admission as the initial part of the enrolment process with Byron Yoga Centre.

Where a student has completed six months of their Principal Course, Byron Yoga Centre does not require a Letter of Release from the original provider.

#### **Prospective students seeking to transfer from Byron Yoga Centre to another provider**

Byron Yoga Centre recognises that, from time to time, there will be requests from International Students for a Letter of Release so that they may enrol at another registered provider of educational services. Students are required to obtain a Letter of Release should they wish to transfer prior to completing six months of their principal course with Byron Yoga Centre. Valid circumstances for requesting a Letter of Release include, but are not limited to, the following:

- personal or financial hardship,
- familial trauma or social anxiety caused by separation, and
- better prospects for educational success and advancement.

Where an International Student enrolled with Byron Yoga Centre requests to transfer to another registered provider of educational services prior to completing six months of their Principal Course, that student shall:

- 1) Make a written request for release from Byron Yoga Centre;
- 2) Provide a formal Offer of Admission from the other provider;
- 3) Receive a written response to the request within five (5) working days.

Where an International Student enrolled with Byron Yoga Centre lodges a written request for a Letter of Release, accompanied by a formal Offer of Admission from another registered provider, Byron Yoga Centre shall:

- 1) Acknowledge receipt of the request and process it without cost to the student;

- 2) Make a determination regarding the request and respond, in writing, within five (5) working days.

If the request is granted, Byron Yoga Centre shall:

- 1) Provide the student with a formal Letter of Release within 5 working days of the determination being made;
- 2) Provide a Statement of Attainment where applicable in accordance with Australian Qualifications Framework guidelines;
- 3) Inform the student, in writing, that he or she is required to contact the nearest Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) Office in order to obtain advice about whether or not a new Student Visa is required;
- 4) Update the PRISM database with regard to the student's current status at Byron Yoga Centre

If the request is refused, Byron Yoga Centre shall:

- 1) Provide the student with a written explanation of the grounds upon which the application was rejected;
- 2) Advise the student that he or she retains the right to appeal the decision in accordance with the Byron Yoga Centre Complaints and Grievances Policy for International Students.

Byron Yoga Centre reserves the right to refuse a request for a Letter of Release in the following instances:

- 1) The student has failed to provide a valid Offer of Admission or other supporting documentation from the other Provider;
- 2) The student has outstanding financial obligations to the Byron Yoga Centre; and
- 3) The student has not returned resources borrowed from the Byron Yoga Centre.

In accordance with Academic Administration best practice, Byron Yoga Centre will maintain a record of all requests for Letters of Release. Copies of all documentation related to each student's request and the response of Byron Yoga Centre will be stored in that particular student's file.

### **Students seeking to transfer from Byron Yoga Centre to another provider after completing 6 months of their Principal Course**

Where an international student enrolled with Byron Yoga Centre requests to transfer to another registered provider of educational services after completing six months of their Principal Course, that student shall:

- 1) Notify the Byron Yoga Centre in writing of their intention to withdraw;

- 2) Ensure all outstanding fees are paid and property belonging to Byron Yoga Centre is returned;
- 3) Ensure all personal details in the Byron Yoga Centre are up to date prior to departure.

Upon receiving such notification from a student, Byron Yoga Centre will:

- 1) Update the student's details in the Byron Yoga Centre database;
- 2) Encourage the student to contact the nearest Department of Immigration and Border Protection Office to discuss their situation;
- 3) Update the PRISM database with regard to the student's current status at Byron Yoga Centre.

## Student Support Services

Byron Yoga Centre will endeavour to support a student through their course of study through means such as access to additional time with trainers and access to professional career guidance counselling when available.

Byron Yoga Centre will also maintain a directory of organisations known throughout the VET sector to provide assistance and guidance to students (Support Agencies Register). Staff at Byron Yoga Centre will assist the student in making contact with the relevant organisation and where possible, implement additional requirements or special circumstances needed by the student in order to have a higher chance of success at completing their studies.

All students are required to complete a Special Needs Form upon enrolment and submit it to the RTO Administration Department.

## Variation to Training Schedule

Should a student require a variation or amendment to the agreed training schedule for any reason, this is to be formally documented with detail surrounding the request for the change. The RTO Chief Executive Officer and the relevant Trainer/Assessor are responsible for ensuring that any changes implemented still meet the requirements of the qualification and relevant Training Package and that the quality of the training and assessment provided are not negatively impacted in any way.

The student, the relevant trainer/assessor and RTO Chief Executive Officer are all to sign off on the amendment and the document is to be filed in the student's hard copy file. A note in the Learner Management System is also to be made by the Administration Department.

The RTO Chief Executive Officer retains the sole right to approve or decline requests for amendments to a student's training schedule. Students have the right to appeal decisions which involve a request being declined and may follow the formal Complaints and Grievances procedure in this regard.

The Variation to Training Schedule Form can be used for the purposes outlined above.

### Withdrawing from Studies

Students who wish to withdraw from their studies at Byron Yoga Centre are required to inform the RTO in writing. This can be done by completing a Withdrawal Form. This ensures that Byron Yoga Centre can appropriately close off the student's enrolment and maintain accurate and up-to-date records. Students will have an opportunity when notifying the RTO of their withdrawal to apply for a refund. Any request for a refund will be assessed in accordance with the Byron Yoga Centre Fees, Charges and Refund Policy.

### Privacy and Confidentiality

Byron Yoga Centre has undertaken to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act 1988, including in particular, the 13 Australian Privacy Principles (9APPs) that fall under this Act.

As a Registered Training Organisation, Byron Yoga Centre is required to report on data it obtains from its students to State and or Federal Government agencies for reasons such as research, statistical analysis and the generation of performance reports for RTOs so they may gain a better understanding of their standing with other RTOs in relation to customer satisfaction.

Information RTOs are required to share includes the courses and subjects in which students are enrolled, their age and gender, details of where they were born and went to school.

The data collected by the RTO must conform to the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information and Statistical Standard (AVETMISS). Following AVETMISS guidelines allows for there to be a benchmark in vocational education and training (VET) measurement that in turn provides a more accurate and defined picture of what is happening in the sector.

It enables comparison and analysis at all levels of the training system, nationally and within each state and territory. Byron Yoga Centre collects this information from students through the issuing of its Enrolment Form provided upon expression of interest in any of our courses.



Information about a student, except as required by law or as required under the Standards for Registered Training Organisations, is not disclosed without the student's written permission and that of their parent or guardian if the student is under 18 years of age. Where a student/guardian consents to disclosure of information, they will be requested to complete the Permission to Disclose Information Form, which provides specific information around what is to be disclosed and to whom. A copy of the completed form will be kept in their student file.

Student files are kept in secure facilities at Byron Yoga Centre offices with access restricted to only key RTO personnel. All RTO personnel are required to sign a Confidentiality Declaration upon being appointed by the company.

Student assessment records are retained in a secure location for a period of 30 years in accordance with current Federal and State legislation, before being destroyed.

Students are encouraged to keep the RTO abreast of changes to their personal circumstances so that information held on file is accurate and the most recent available.

#### Student Access to Information

Byron Yoga Centre is able to provide students with copies of information held about them at their request. Please provide adequate notice (at least one week) in this regard.

#### Procedure

- Student to complete an Request for Information Form;
- Completed form to be submitted to RTO Administration Department;
- Allow 1 week for processing;
- RTO to contact student when information is ready for collection;
- Administration to sign off that information has been collected.