



## Student Personal Safety

This document has been produced by the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education. It provides advice to help international students to make informed decisions about personal safety while they are in Australia.

### **Australia is a safe place to study**

Australia is by international standards a safe country with low levels of crime. Australia has a law-abiding culture and crime against any person is not acceptable.

The 2011 OECD Better Life Index rated Australia 9.3 out of 10 for personal safety,<sup>1</sup> one of the highest ratings awarded to any country. In 2010, 86 per cent of international students in Australian higher education said they were satisfied or very satisfied with safety levels in Australia, which compares favourably with the international measures.<sup>2</sup>

It is however important that students are aware of ways to minimise risks, especially while they are getting used to being in a new country and adjusting to a new way of life.

### **Personal Safety – General**

While Australia is a safe place to live, you should still take the necessary precautions to protect yourself, just like you would in your home country.

To help you to stay safe when you go out:

- At night, always consider how you will get home. Think about pre-booking a taxi or arranging transport with a friend or family member. Make sure you have enough money to get home.
- Whenever possible, travel with a friend or as part of a group.
- Always keep your bag in view and close to your body. Be discrete with your wallet, cash and mobile phone.
- Never hitch-hike.
- If you do not have a mobile phone, make sure that you have a phone card or change to make a phone call. It is also possible to make reverse charge calls from public, mobile and home phones.
- Remember to call **000** in the event of an emergency. If you do not speak English well, say your language and an interpreter will assist you with your call. Calls to **000** are free of charge.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org](http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org)

<sup>2</sup> [https://aei.gov.au/research/Publications/Documents/2010\\_International\\_Student\\_Report.pdf](https://aei.gov.au/research/Publications/Documents/2010_International_Student_Report.pdf)

## **Personal Safety – at home**

Here are some tips to help keep you safe at home:

- Lock your doors and windows when you go out. It is a good idea to have them locked when you are at home as well.
- Do not let a stranger into your house. Check the credentials of tradespeople and salespeople.
- Be careful about the information you give to strangers over the phone or through social networking internet sites. If you are not at home or go on holidays, do not make this information available to strangers.
- Maintain a working smoke alarm in your home. Check the battery regularly.
- If you come home to find evidence of a break-in (such as a broken window or door lock), do not go inside. Call the police from a safe location outside.
- Remember to call 000 in the event of an emergency. If you do not speak English well, say your language and an interpreter will assist you with your call.

## **Personal Safety – at your education institution**

When you are at your place of learning:

- Make sure that you are aware of the security and emergency arrangements at your education institution and your local area. Your institution will be able to provide you with this information either before you arrive or on arrival.
- Many institutions offer security escort service for students for out of office hours or a shuttle bus service.
- If you drive to your institution, find the most suitable well lit car park for your study area.
- Find the safest, best lit path to use when walking to and from your study area at night.
- When leaving your study area at night, where possible try to walk with a friend or a group.

## **Water Safety**

Take care when visiting Australian beaches and places to swim:

- Only swim at a beach that is patrolled by Lifeguards and only swim between the red and yellow flags
- Be careful of strong currents or rips. If you are not sure, ask a Lifeguard.

For more information on water safety, please see the [www.royallifesaving.com.au](http://www.royallifesaving.com.au).

## **Sun Safety**

The Australian outdoors is wonderful but you need to take care when going outdoors. Make sure you follow proper skin safety to help protect you against sunburn:

- Wear sun protection such as SPF 30+ water resistant sun cream, hats and UV protective sunglasses.
- Avoid long time periods in the sun between 10am and 3pm and seek shade.

For more information about sun protection, please visit the Cancer Council website

[www.cancercouncil.com.au](http://www.cancercouncil.com.au).

## **Public Transport Safety**

Travelling on public transport should be a safe and comfortable experience. Numerous security measures have been adopted to maximise the safety of travellers including security officers and guards, help points, good lighting and security cameras.

- Avoid isolated bus stops.
- Check timetables to avoid long waits.
- Train carriages nearest the driver are always left open and lit.
- Try not to become isolated. If you find yourself left in a carriage on your own or with only one other person you may feel more comfortable if you move to another carriage.

## **Taxis**

Taxis are a safe method of public transport. To increase your confidence when travelling by taxi, consider the following suggestions:

- Sit wherever you feel most comfortable. This may mean travelling in the back seat of the taxi.
- Specify to the driver the route you wish to take to reach your destination. Speak up if the driver takes a different route to the one you have specified or are familiar with.
- If you do not want your home address known, stop a few houses away from your destination.

## **Dealing with confrontation**

If you encounter a verbal or physical confrontation:

- It is not worth placing your personal safety at risk for the sake of property that can generally be replaced.
- Report any incident to police as soon as you can.
- Remember that in emergency situations you can call 000 and ask for police or ambulance assistance.

## **Emergencies**

- Australia's emergency phone number is **000 (zero, zero, zero)**.
- The following is a checklist that can be used to decide whether you should call **000**:
  - Is someone seriously injured or in need of urgent medical help?
  - Is your life or property being threatened?
  - Have you just witnessed a serious accident or crime?
  - If you answer YES call Triple Zero (**000**). Triple Zero calls are free – even from a mobile phone.
  - Do not hang up the telephone if you do not speak English well – say your language and an interpreter will assist you with your call.
- **112** is the GSM international standard emergency number for digital mobile phones. **112** can be dialled anywhere in the world with GSM coverage and is automatically translated to that country's emergency number.
- For non-emergency police attendance call **131 444** anywhere in Australia except Victoria. In Victoria contact your local police station.

For more information about personal safety, please visit the Study in Australia website [www.studyinaustralia.gov.au](http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au).

## Important contacts

Contact	Phone Number	Webpage	Call for information about
Emergencies: Ambulance, Fire brigade, Police	000	<a href="http://www.triplezero.gov.au">www.triplezero.gov.au</a>	All emergencies.
Local police, non-urgent matters	For life-threatening, or urgent matters call 000.  For non-urgent matters call <b>131 444</b> (outside of Victoria).  In Victoria call your local police station	ACT <a href="http://www.afp.gov.au">www.afp.gov.au</a> NT <a href="http://www.pfes.nt.gov.au">www.pfes.nt.gov.au</a> NSW <a href="http://www.police.nsw.gov.au">www.police.nsw.gov.au</a> Qld <a href="http://www.police.qld.gov.au">www.police.qld.gov.au</a> SA <a href="http://www.sapolice.sa.gov.au">www.sapolice.sa.gov.au</a> Vic <a href="http://www.police.vic.gov.au">www.police.vic.gov.au</a> Tas <a href="http://www.police.tas.gov.au">www.police.tas.gov.au</a> WA <a href="http://www.police.wa.gov.au">www.police.wa.gov.au</a>	Police attendance.
Lifeline	<b>131 114</b>	<a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au/Home/default.aspx">www.lifeline.org.au/Home/default.aspx</a>	Access to crisis support, suicide prevention and mental health support services.
Poison Information Centre	<b>131 126</b>	<b>NSW</b> <a href="http://www.chw.edu.au/poisons/">www.chw.edu.au/poisons/</a>  <b>Queensland</b> <a href="http://www.health.qld.gov.au/PoisonsInformationCentre/">www.health.qld.gov.au/PoisonsInformationCentre/</a>  <b>Victoria</b> <a href="http://www.austin.org.au/poisons">www.austin.org.au/poisons</a>  <b>Western Australia</b> <a href="http://www.scgh.health.wa.gov.au/Clinicians/Services/PoisonInformationCentre.html">www.scgh.health.wa.gov.au/Clinicians/Services/PoisonInformationCentre.html</a>	Management, assessment and treatment of poisoning.