



National Visitor Safety Handbook

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The National Visitor Safety Program is an initiative of all Australian State Tourism Organisations and the Commonwealth Government with the aim of promoting safe holiday experiences for international visitors.

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Introduction

This document has been prepared to provide the tourism industry and the media with a glossary of tourism safety messages. These messages have been created to provide a template for use by major tourism information providers and the media when promoting tourist safety in Australia.

The risks and requirements of tourists have been considered in detail in the preparation of this document. We have developed not only this glossary of information, but also a matrix which demonstrates the possible cross-purposing of this information to provide a different tone and emphasis to different tourist source markets.

Whilst this glossary is designed to be generic in nature, some tourism markets lend themselves to more specific, direct targeting of safety messages.

A simple HTML application will be created to allow for the implementation of the safety messages onto relevant web sites. These web sites will be contacted to discuss the use and placement of the messages.

A wide variety of information was reviewed in the preparation of this glossary. Some of the elements of these messages have been drawn from existing information, including such sources as:

- *Travel Safely in Australia* (Brochure by NVSP)
- *Let's Look Out for Australia* (Australian Government Terrorism Awareness Handbook) 2003
- The Office of Road Safety Western Australia website www.officeofroadsafety.wa.gov.au
- Department of Primary Industries Western Australia www.dpi.wa.gov.au (pastoral area safety)
- South Australia's main tourism website www.southaustralia.com
- The Australian National Security Website www.nationalsecurity.com.au
- Surf Lifesaving Australia www.slsa.asn.au
- Safe Boating Australia www.safeboating.org.au
- Lonely Planet www.lonelyplanet.com
- Australia's main tourism website www.australia.com
- The Office of Road Safety Queensland www.roadsafety.qld.gov.au
- Dive Queensland subsection at www.queenslandholidays.com.au
- GBRMPA Responsible Reef Practices website www.gbrmpa.gov.au



- Web Wombat Travel Safety website www.webwombat.com.au/travel/articles/tips-travelling-australia.htm
- Australian Communications and Media Authority website www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_1688
- Environmental Health Directorate WA website www.health.wa.gov.au/envirohealth/hazards/mbdiseases.cfm
- NSW Rural Fire Brigade website <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~g1412r/cautions.htm>
- Travel Safety Information DOTARS www.dotars.gov.au/transport/security/information/index.aspx



Water Safety

Know your health limitations when considering swimming, diving, snorkelling, or other active pursuits.

Beaches

Surf Lifesavers

Surf Lifesavers wear distinctive red and yellow caps, and patrol the areas between red and yellow flags on the beach. If you get into trouble in the water, stay calm, raise your arm in the air to signal a lifesaver for help. Surf lifesavers give their time as volunteers in the service of their communities.

Flags for Safety

- At the beach always swim in-between the red and yellow flags – not outside them. The flags mark the safest place to swim and the area where lifesavers and lifeguards patrol.
- Read and obey warning signs on beaches, beach access points and at waterways.
- If you are unsure of the beach surf conditions check with a lifesaver.

F – find the red and yellow flags and swim between them

L – look at the safety signs

A – ask a lifeguard or lifesaver for some good advice

G – grab a friend to swim with you

S – stick your hand up for help if you get into trouble in the water

Waves, Rips and Water Dangers

- Always swim with others.
- Children should always be accompanied in the water by an adult who can swim.
- Many surf beaches in Australia have strong currents, called rips. These are powerful currents of water that can drag you along and out to sea. If you find yourself being caught in a rip, do not panic.
- If you get into trouble in the water, stay calm, raise your arm to signal for help. Float with a current or rip - don't try and swim against it.
- Never swim at unpatrolled beaches
- Never swim at night
- Never swim under the influence of alcohol
- Never dive into the water

Sun Safety

Sun protection is a serious matter in Australia, as the Ultra Violet (UV) is very high at all times of the year. The UV exposure is at its greatest between 10am and 3pm. Avoid skin exposure to the sun between these times. To avoid skin burn, never go outside without a broad spectrum sunscreen of at least SPF 30 and a hat, and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before sun exposure, and re-apply regularly.



Sun Stroke

Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration, sun stroke and heat exhaustion. Sun Stroke and, more seriously, heat exhaustion occurs when fluid intake does not keep up with fluid loss. Symptoms include dizziness, fainting, fatigue, nausea and vomiting, and pale clammy skin. Rest in a cool shady area and replace lost fluids with water or sports drinks to correct the problem. If continued disorientation occurs seek medical attention.

Sharks

- Sharks can be found in ocean, river and canal waters throughout Australia in varying sizes.
- Australia's patrolled public beaches are comprehensively shark-netted to avert any potential danger.
- Please swim between the flags where lifeguards patrol for shark dangers

Some simple rules for safe swimming apply to help reduce the risk of incidents involving sharks:

- Always swim between the red and yellow patrol flags and surf at patrolled beaches where there is shark safety equipment in place
- Obey the lifesavers' and lifeguards' advice, and heed all flags and notice board warnings
- Leave the water immediately if a shark is sighted or if advised by the lifesavers/lifeguards (siren or bell) that a shark has been sighted
- Do not swim or surf after dusk, at night or before dawn when sharks are most active
- Do not swim or surf in murky or silt-laden waters
- Do not swim in or near river mouths, creeks, deep channels and canals
- Never swim or surf alone
- Never swim or surf when bleeding
- Do not swim or surf near schools of fish
- Do not swim near, or interfere with shark safety equipment

Marine Stingers

- Be aware of dangerous marine stingers present in northern Australian waters during the higher risk months (November- May).
- Always swim at patrolled beaches between the red and yellow flags.
 - Swim in stinger enclosures where these are provided.
 - Wear protective clothing (eg wet suit or lycra body suit) to reduce exposure to potential stings. It is recommended that protective clothing covers over 75% of the body's skin surface.
 - Do not swim when beaches are closed.
 - Look for and observe safety and warning signs that will advise of dangers present.
 - If someone is stung, remove them from the water immediately being careful not to be stung yourself, treat the area with vinegar, lift off any tentacles with a stick or similar.
 - In the case of marine stings in northern Australian waters, the following is recommended,
 - Restrain the patient from rubbing the sting and advise them to remain still.
 - Call for Help, Dial 000 for an ambulance.
 - Administer Emergency Care.
 - Treat the sting by pouring vinegar onto the sting area.
 - Seek medical aid, transport the patient to hospital.

Refer to www.marinestingers.com for more information.



Crocodiles

Saltwater crocodiles are a real threat in the north of Australia. Please observe safety signs or ask locals if rivers and waterholes are crocodile-free, as they can travel a long way inland as well as live along the coast.

Some simple rules for being 'croc-wise':

- obey crocodile warning signs —they are there for your safety and protection;
- never swim in water where crocodiles may live, even if there is no warning sign present
- when fishing, always stand a few metres back from the water's edge and never stand on logs or; branches overhanging the water;
- never clean fish or discard fish scraps near the water's edge or at boat ramps;
- stay well back from any crocodile slide marks. Crocodiles may still be close by and may approach people and boats;
- never dangle your arms or legs over the side of a boat. If you fall out of a boat, get out of the water as quickly as possible;
- never provoke, harass or interfere with crocodiles, even small ones;
- never feed crocodiles — it is illegal and dangerous;
- camp at least 2m above the high water mark and at least 50m from the water's edge;
- avoid places where native animals and domestic stock drink;
- never leave food and fish scraps at your campsite. Always check that previous campers have left no food scraps;
- never prepare food, wash dishes or pursue any other activities near the water's edge or adjacent sloping banks; and
- be more aware of crocodiles at night and during the breeding and nesting seasons.

Smoking on Beaches

Smoking is illegal on patrolled beaches in many states. Fines are considerable.

Water Holes and Lagoons

Submerged Dangers

Never jump or dive into shallow water, a rock pool, creek, lake or river as there could be submerged rocks or logs.

Crocodiles

Crocodiles can be found around rivers, freshwater lagoons and coastal beaches in northern Australia. Read and obey warning signs.



Dive Safety

Australia has many dive sites of world standard, offering a variety of experiences.

Check Dive Conditions First

Please be aware that diving conditions throughout Australia can change quickly with varying weather, tides and other factors. Local knowledge is essential.

If you intend diving in a new location, check with a dive operator and/or dive store in the locality or contact the Diving Industry Association in the state that you are visiting for information on site conditions, safety regulations, licences, permits and diver rating requirements.

Know your Limitations

- If diving or snorkelling make sure you are fit to dive/snorkel. You must tell your dive supervisor if you have a medical condition, can't swim or have never dived or snorkelled before.
- When diving or snorkelling ALWAYS speak to the supervisor if you have any concerns, follow the supervisor's instructions, and stay close to the supervisor and your dive buddy.

Shipwreck Diving

Divers should note that diving on shipwrecks requires careful planning and an appropriate level of experience and training. Many diving locations require permits.

Shipwrecks are protected by legislation. When taking one of the shipwreck trails feel free to dive, photograph and explore the wrecks. Do not interfere with them by disturbing or removing anything or anchoring on top of their remains.

Cave Diving

Cave Diving is defined as the diving of water-filled passages/caverns using SCUBA or other supplied breathing apparatus. Only persons properly trained and certified by a body such as the Cave Divers Association of Australia should attempt cave diving.



Transport Safety

Cars/Motorcycle Safety

Motorcycles

If you are riding on a motorcycle, moped, motor scooter or bicycle, (also non-motorised scooter in Victoria and South Australia) it is the law that you wear a crash helmet.

Driver's Licences

If you want to drive a motor vehicle or motorcycle within Australia you must have a valid license for that type of vehicle.

Interstate visitors staying less than three months in another state may drive with their current driver's licence. Overseas visitors can drive in Australia for up to 12 months if an International Driving Permit is carried.

Seat Belts

By law, all passengers must wear seatbelts at all times when travelling in a motor vehicle in Australia.

- Children should be restrained using the right car seats for their size and weight.
- Restraints need to be fitted correctly and used correctly.
- For babies up to six months of age (9 to 12kg* or 700 to 850mm long) use a rearward-facing restraint.
- For toddlers from approximately six months to four years (8 to 18kg) use a forward-facing child car seat that is attached using an adult seat belt and an upper tether strap.
- For children who have outgrown their child car seat (or weigh between 14 and 26kg), use either an h-harness in combination with a booster seat; or a booster seat that raises the height of the child so that an adult seat belt fits properly. There are fines for not wearing a seatbelt or using an appropriate child restraint.

Mobile Phones

Do not use handheld mobile phones while driving. In Australia it is illegal to operate a mobile phone when driving without an earpiece or hands-free kit. There are heavy fines for doing so.

Look Out For Children

Always drive with caution, especially around schools and other places where children may be walking or cycling. Children are often unpredictable and can lack road sense so slow down around schools. Look out for children emerging from between parked cars and remember that they are shorter and more difficult to see. In some states the speed limit when approaching schools is reduced to 40kph. Watch out for school zones where the speed limit is 40kph.



Drink Driving

Driving after you have consumed alcohol is dangerous. Australia has strict laws and penalties on 'drink driving' and police actively enforce them through random breath testing programs.

- If you have a full driver's licence you must not drive if your blood alcohol level is 0.05 per cent or higher. At 0.05 per cent blood alcohol concentration, your risk of being involved in a crash doubles.
- Drivers on 'learner' plates and 'provisional' plates, drivers of heavy vehicles, taxis, chauffeured vehicles or buses must not drive after drinking alcohol.
- Fully licensed drivers must ensure that their blood alcohol level stays below .05 or they may be charged with "driving under the influence".

Drugs and Driving

- Driving after taking drugs that affect your ability to drive is illegal in all states and territories; penalties are severe.

Roadside Assistance

Roadside assistance in Australia is offered by:

QLD:	RACQ	www.racq.com.au	24 hour roadside assistance 131111
NSW:	NRMA	www.mynrma.com.au	24 hour roadside assistance 131111
VIC:	RACV	www.racv.com.au	24 hour roadside assistance 131111
SA:	RAA	www.raa.net	24 hour roadside assistance 131111
NT:	AANT	www.aant.com.au	24 hour roadside assistance 131111
ACT:	RACT	www.ract.com.au	24 hour roadside assistance 131111
WA:	RAC WA	www.rac.com.au	24 hour roadside assistance 131111
TAS:	RACT	www.ract.com.au	24 hour roadside assistance 131111

In most cases, reciprocal rights are offered to association members from other states and some overseas countries.

Hitch Hikers

Do not pick up hitch hikers under any conditions. Do not hitch hike. Both practices are incredibly dangerous.

Road Conditions

Keep Left

In Australia, you must drive on the left side of two-way roads. Ask passengers to remind you each time you set off and when you are turning at an intersection – it could save your life.



Speed Limits

Speed limits are enforced more strictly in Australia than in most other countries. The speed limit is the maximum driving speed allowed. You must not drive above this limit. Some roads and streets don't have speed limit signs, but speed limits still apply.

- As a general rule on roads where there are no signs but there are street lights or houses or other closely spaced buildings next to the road, the speed limit is 50 km/h (or approx. 31 miles/hour).
- Where there are no signs or street lighting or houses or buildings next to the road the speed limit can vary from 60km/h to 100 km/h (or approx. 37 to 62 miles/hour) in most states and territories. Please check for signs.
- If the weather is poor (raining, fog) make sure you drive more slowly.
- All states and territories have speed cameras, so slow down, drive safely and avoid heavy fines.
- Always check what the local speed limits are in each state and territory.

Road Markings

- Where the centre line marking on the road is a single broken line, vehicles may cross the line to overtake when it is safe to do so.
- If the centre marking has two lines you must not overtake if the line closest to your vehicle is unbroken.
 - Where arrows are painted on the road, you must only drive in the direction they indicate.



Stop Signs

This sign means you must stop and give way to all vehicles. Stop your vehicle just before the white stop line painted on the road. If there is no line, stop where you have a clear view of approaching traffic and give way to all vehicles approaching from your left and right.

Driving Tired

Many people die in crashes because the driver was tired. To avoid driving tired:

- after a long flight, wait until you have adapted to sleeping normally at night, particularly if you have crossed time zones.
- share the driving with your licensed companions
- take regular rest stops at least every 2 hours
- don't try to drive too far in one day
- if you're tired, pull the car over and have a short sleep

There are rest areas located at regular intervals on main roads for road users to pull over and rest when tired. Facilities may be limited but sometimes include seating, tables and shelter. If you are very tired the only cure is sleep. It is recommended that you get out of the car and walk around for 15 minutes at least every two hours.



Large Trucks – Road Trains

Large trucks, known as road trains, can be the length of 10 cars with three or more trailers. It can take up to 2.5 kilometres to overtake a road train at 100km/h. Also allow plenty of room before you overtake as they may sway from side to side as you overtake. Be prepared for the 'wind rush' when passing as it can pull you towards the road train.

When being overtaken by a road train, maintain your speed and don't move off the road. Only slow once the road train moves out to pass and make sure there is space for the road train between you and the vehicle in front of you.

Railway Crossings

Trains and trams can't stop quickly so keep clear of tracks at all times. Always check both the left and right before crossing at a railway crossing.

- Do not rely on the horn to warn you of an approaching train or tram.
- Never race a train or tram at a level crossing.
- Never drive around lowered boom barriers. Do not attempt to raise lowered boom barriers. Always wait for the train or tram to pass.
- Always wait for the lights and bells to stop before driving over the level crossing.
- Do not enter a level crossing unless you can clear the crossing completely on the other side.
- If your vehicle stalls on a level crossing, evacuate your passengers immediately and call the Police on 000.
- Not all rail crossings have audible warning systems or gates, particularly in country areas. When there are no lights or bells at the level crossing, look and listen for approaching trains or trams in both directions.
- At a multiple track level crossing, always be aware that there may be multiple trains or trams travelling in both directions.
- The train or tram you see may be closer and be travelling faster than it appears.

Road Safety in Outback and Rural Areas

Be Prepared

Good preparation and common sense are the keys to a successful journey in the Outback. Routes vary from excellent sealed roads to the roughest of bush tracks.

Some of Australia's outback tracks are among the best four-wheel-drive journeys in the world. These provide excellent access to the Northern Territory, South Australia and Queensland, however they should always be treated with respect and caution. Seasonal conditions change the terrain of the roads from smooth sandy tracks to corrugations, stony and rocky crossings.

Roads such as the Canning Stock Route in Western Australia should not be travelled unless part of a well-organised convoy.



Take Care on the Road

Driving in rural and remote areas requires special driving skills and awareness of different conditions.

Remember that distances between towns and settlements in Australia are often hundreds of kilometres. Plan your trip accordingly.

Take Regular Breaks

- Take frequent rest breaks and change drivers regularly.

Always Carry Spares

If travelling to remote areas away from major highways take extra food, water, fuel, digging tools, tyres and a distress beacon (EPIRB).

Know your Facilities

Be aware of available facilities and services (fuel, water and medical) on your journey, before you depart.

In regional areas, you can drive for hundreds of kilometres without sight of fuel or food supplies. Please ensure that you carry appropriate supplies with you, and are aware of the locations of services on your journey. For more information on the location of services in regional areas, please refer to: www.whereis.com.au or contact your local regional tourist information centre.

- Check with your motoring organisation for emergency services and facilities.

QLD:	RACQ	www.racq.com.au
NSW:	NRMA	www.mynrma.com.au
VIC:	RACV	www.racv.com.au
SA:	RAA	www.raa.net
NT:	AANT	www.aant.com.au
ACT:	RACT	www.ract.com.au
WA:	RAC WA	www.rac.com.au
TAS:	RACT	www.ract.com.au

Share the Road

You are sharing the road with everything from cyclists to road trains. Give room to cyclists and prepare for wind turbulence from road trains. Use patience and courtesy.

Vehicle Care

- Make sure your vehicle and its components (jack, spare tyre etc) are in good working order and has been serviced recently.
- Make sure you know how to do basic repairs, such as changing a tyre, before you leave.
- Always carry a snatch strap and tyre pressure gauge with you when travelling in remote areas, as well as extra food and water.



Extreme Weather

Take care when travelling in remote areas during summer. Temperatures in Outback Australia can reach over 50°C (122°F). In the evenings the temperature can dip to below freezing. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately.

Tell Someone Where You Are

Our remote areas have few towns and facilities, often with large distances between them, so plan your trip. When travelling in remote areas or planning to leave major roads, advise local police of your intended route.

If You Break Down

If you do experience a breakdown, remain with the vehicle at all times. Do not attempt to walk to safety. Stay in the shade and keep hydrated.

Avoid Unmarked Roads and Tracks

Avoid tracks that are for private use only, or that are not marked on maps. The outback is vast, and services can be hundreds of kilometres apart.

Gates

If you encounter gates, they should always be left as they were found. Open gates should be left open and closed gates should be closed after passing through them.

Driving After Dark

Avoid driving after dark as cattle and wildlife often congregate alongside outback roads at night.

Wandering Stock

In regional areas, stock is frequently found grazing in roadside land. This stock can wander onto roads, and into the path of vehicles. Take care to avoid any stock on roads. Or, be cautious when stock is grazing near roads.

Road Conditions in Outback and Rural Areas

Road conditions in the outback can vary from sealed surfaces to gravel and dirt. Always use a four-wheel drive vehicle on unsealed roads in remote areas. Be careful of holes, soft road edges, narrow roads with unstable edges, narrow bridges, changing surfaces and dusty roads. The environment can change rapidly.

- Always check on local road conditions before leaving major roads. Check with local police, petrol stations and/or park rangers. For National Park information refer to www.npws.com.au.
- Turn your vehicle's headlights on to low beam during the day so vehicles can see you.
- Drive slowly on unsealed roads and take extra care – loose surfaces are unpredictable.
- If you drive off the side of the road, do not overcorrect but slow down and return to the road when the vehicle is travelling at a safe speed.
- Obey road closure signs.



- Flooded roads: You may come across water on the road. Roads may be covered in water which appears shallow but can have a current strong enough to sweep your vehicle away. Wait until the water level drops or use an alternative route.
- If your vehicle breaks down in a remote area, ALWAYS stay with your vehicle. This is the single most important rule of survival.

Wildlife on the Roads

- Watch out for animals on the road such as kangaroos and emus. Livestock also graze on the side of unfenced roads and can present significant danger to vehicles.
- The most active time for many animals is sunrise and sunset. If an animal crosses in front of you, reduce speed safely and do not swerve violently or you may roll the vehicle.
- If you see an injured animal on the road, or want to check a pouch for young, you should follow these guidelines:
- Your first priority is to take your own safety into account. There are sections of road where you may be invisible to on-coming traffic, or cars simply won't be able to stop in time.
- If you're sure you are safe, try to move the animal to the side of the road. Keep claws and teeth well away from your body. Once the animal is off the road, you can assess the injuries.
- If the animal is dead, try to remove it from the road, as a lot of crashes occur because people swerve to miss animals that are already dead.
- Do not transport an injured animal if you don't have a secure container with air holes in it.
- If an orphaned animal has been thrown from the pouch on impact, keep it wrapped securely and warmly in a quiet environment until you can get help from a carer. Don't attempt to give it food or water.
- If you have a mobile phone, call a vet or call WIRES (the number is available from directory assistance) so that a wildlife ranger or volunteer can be sent out to help. In NSW call 1300 WIRES.

Driving in Floods

- Do not attempt to cross flooded bridges or causeways unless you are absolutely sure of the water depth and any road damage. Even shallow water can have the strength to sweep away vehicles. Most flash floods recede within 24 hours.

Pastoral Stations Driving

When travelling in the outback you should be aware that you often pass through pastoral stations (except when you're in parks and conservation reserves).

- You do not need permission to travel on a public road through a pastoral station. However even on a public road, you may still encounter gates and livestock. You must leave gates as you find them. Never interfere with livestock.
- Stay on designated secondary roads as you will be travelling through environmentally sensitive country.



Boating / Maritime Safety

Weather Safety

- Before setting out, check the weather forecast with the Bureau of Meteorology at: www.bom.gov.au

Tides and Charts

- Check the tides and chart of where you're planning to go. Carry the chart with you if possible. Tides can change rapidly, particularly in northern Australia, leaving boats stuck on sandbars. Ensure that you are aware of tidal forces in the areas that you plan to travel, before setting out.

Boat books can provide you with charts of all waterways in Australia. For more information: www.boatbooks-aust.com.au.

Tell Someone Where You're Going

- Advise someone responsible of your boating plans. If the plan changes during the voyage, notify them immediately and always report in when you return.
- Liaise with your local marine rescue group before departing on your voyage. Notify them of your plans, and planned return time.

Safety Equipment

- Ensure you have the correct safety equipment and survival gear on board including life jackets (Personal Flotation Devices) and a distress beacon (EPIRB).
- Make sure your passengers know where the equipment is and how to use it. (Safety equipment requirements vary from state to state.)

Fuel Supplies

- Make sure you have enough fuel for the return trip and remember, changed weather conditions on your return could mean fuel consumption could double. It may be calm when you head out but by midday a sea breeze could be creating hazardous conditions and cause you to use more fuel than you had planned.

Maintain your Boat Well

- Make sure that the boat you plan to use is properly maintained/serviced and the battery charged. Check that appropriate safety equipment is on board and that you and your passengers know how to use it..

Carry a Marine Radio

- Carry a marine radio (please do not rely on a mobile phone). A radio Mayday can be heard by many people at the same time and is a lot more reliable than a mobile phone.

Food and Water

- Ensure you have enough food and water for all on board.



Navigation Rules

- Make sure you know all the navigation rules and keep clear of larger vessels that cannot manoeuvre as quickly as yours.
- Travel at a safe speed, particularly when visibility is reduced.
- Maintain a constant watch on the weather.
- All the time you are on the water you must keep a good lookout and be ready to give way to other vessels.
- If you must give way, do it in good time and make a move that will be obvious to the other vessels.
- In general, power boats have to keep out of the way of sailing and fishing vessels, and vessels that are hampered by such tasks including dredging, cable laying and so on.
- Always keep to the right hand side of channels - golden rule "look to the right, give way to the right, turn to the right and stay to the right".

Speed Limit Restrictions

- You are not allowed to travel at a speed or in a way that causes a nuisance or damage to people or other boats nor cause damage or erosion to the bank or property.
- You may not drive a powerboat at over eight knots:
 - Through an arch of a bridge (unless water skiing is specifically permitted for a bridge)
 - In or through a mooring area
 - In any water less than three metres deep
 - Within 15 metres of a vessel under way
 - Within 45 metres of:
 - a moored vessel
 - a person in the water
 - a jetty or wharf
 - a river bank or low water mark.

Limits for Small Vessels

- Vessels under 3.75 metres in length (including personal watercraft) may not go further to sea than five nautical miles from the mainland.

Emergency Services

- The Police, Volunteer Coast Guard and the Sea Rescue Squadron provide rescue and emergency services in all states. Most rescue services in Australia are operated by highly trained volunteers, giving up their own time to provide protection to boaties in Australian waters.



Cycling Safety

Helmets

All cyclists and passengers must wear a helmet approved by Standards Australia. Your helmet must be correctly positioned and securely fastened.

Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrians need to be aware of their rights and responsibilities as road users and walk with care to ensure their safety.

Crossing Roads

Traffic in Australia travels on the left hand side of the road which may mean traffic approaches from a different direction to that you are used to.

- Pedestrians should ALWAYS look to the left and right before crossing the road.
- Pedestrians should not cross a road if there is a red “don’t walk” sign, there is a red walking man symbol, there is no pedestrian light showing, or there are twin flashing red traffic lights.
- At zebra crossings traffic is required to stop for pedestrians. However, pedestrians should take care to look both ways and ensure that traffic stops before stepping out onto the road.

Jaywalking

- Jaywalking is illegal in Australia. Jaywalking is crossing a road within 20 metres of a pedestrian crossing when pedestrian lights are not green. The penalty for jaywalking is approximately \$30.

At Railway Crossings

- Pedestrians should not enter or stay on a railway pedestrian crossing if any nearby warning lights or bells are working.
- Pedestrians should look both ways after a train has passed a railway pedestrian crossing to be sure another train is not coming on another track.



Rural Areas Safety

Hitch Hiking

Hitch Hiking anywhere within Australia can be dangerous and is not recommended. Please plan to use conventional transport means for each and every trip. Do not pick up hitch hikers.

Stay on Designated Main Roads

When travelling in regional areas stay on main roads in the outback. The population is a quite sparse in regional areas and you could find yourself a long way from help if an emergency occurs.

Hiking and Walking

Always stay on marked pathways and behind barriers for your own safety when hiking and/or walking in regional areas such as bushland or desert. It is surprisingly easy to get lost if you leave the designated path. Always research the duration, difficulty and condition of the walk and ensure you have sufficient supplies of food and water. Always tell someone where you are going and when you will be back.

Camping Rules and Regulations

Always camp in designated camping areas.

Camping is not permitted on pastoral stations without prior permission from leaseholders.

If permission is granted please remember these are working pastoral properties and the following points should be taken into consideration:

- Camping is not permitted within one kilometre of a building or homestead or within 500 metres of a stock watering point.
- Do not disturb grazing animals or interfere with watering points.
- Conserve native habitat by using liquid fuel or gas cookers and observe fire restrictions.
- Take your rubbish with you.

Fire Safety when Camping

Fire restrictions are common throughout Australia. Please ensure that you are aware of restrictions in your area, and follow them obediently.

Always extinguish campfires with water, rather than sand or soil, to avoid flare-ups or burns. Ensure the fire is completely extinguished.

In the case of fire call emergency services on triple zero (000) or 112 for mobile phone.

4WD Safety in the Outback

Always drive four-wheel-drive vehicles at reduced speeds on unsealed roads. Dust can limit your visibility. Please take care when overtaking, especially road trains.

- Take frequent rest breaks and change drivers regularly.
- Obey all road closure signs.
- If you break down DO NOT LEAVE YOUR VEHICLE. Do not attempt to walk to safety.
- Use only recognised public access tracks and designated camping areas. Seek prior approval from landholders to use private tracks.
- Remember that public access routes are located in very remote areas. On many outback tracks, traffic is very sparse particularly in the summer months.



Using UHF CB Radios

UHF (Ultra High Frequency) radio is still a very common form of public communication in the Outback. The system is used by emergency services, the police and pastoralists

Several channels are set aside for special uses. These are:

- Channels 5 and 35 are dedicated for emergency communications ONLY.
- Channel 11 is the UHF Call Channel. Once you have established contact with another traveller, switch to another channel to continue talking. This frees up the call channel for other users.
- Channel 40 is the road channel. Many truck drivers use Channel 40.
- Channels 22 and 23 are used for telemetry and remote control purposes. The ACA advises that voice communications on these channels is prohibited.
- Repeaters transmit between channels 1-8 and receive between channels 31 and 38. Avoid these channels for non-repeater (simplex) communications.
- The following channels are suggested for general communication: # 9, 10, 12-21, 24-30, 39.



Weather Safety

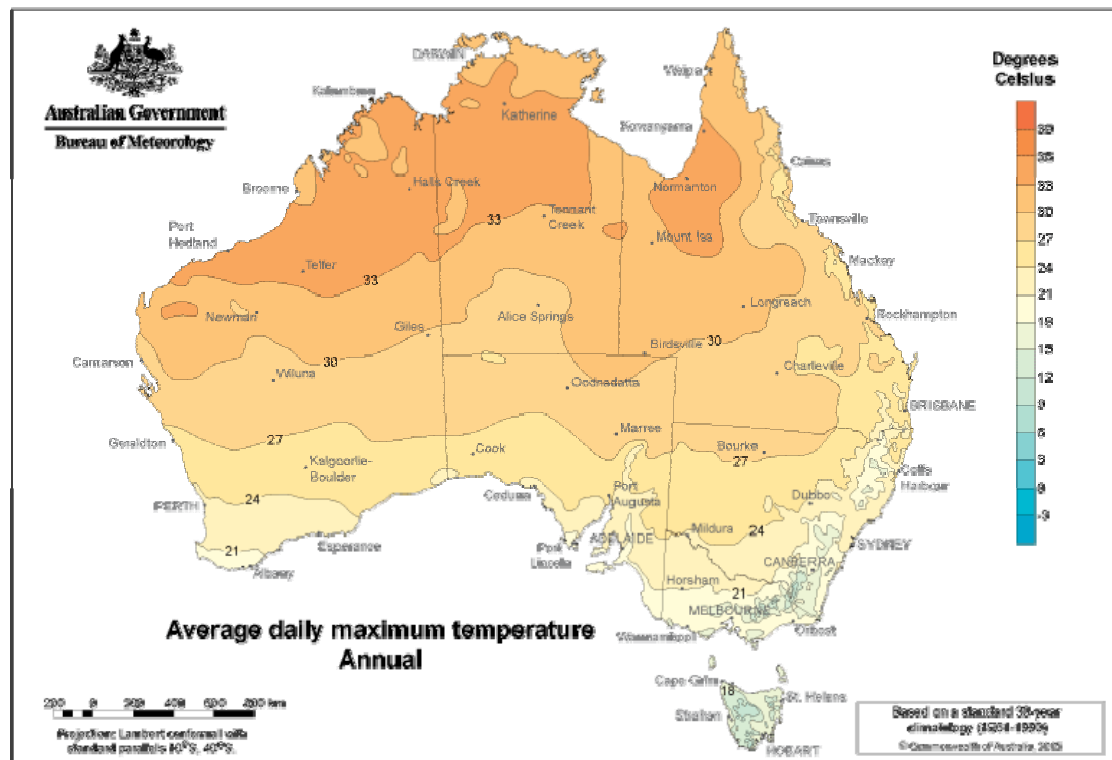
Australian Seasons

WEATHER FOR SYDNEY

Mean Daily Temperatures for Sydney	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Daily Maximum Celsius	25.8	25.7	24.7	22.4	19.3	16.9	16.2	17.7	19.9	22.0	23.6	25.1
Daily Maximum Fahrenheit	78.4	78.3	76.5	72.3	66.7	62.4	61.2	63.9	67.8	71.6	74.5	77.2
Daily Minimum Celsius	18.6	18.7	17.5	14.7	11.5	9.2	8.0	8.9	11.0	13.5	15.5	17.5
Daily Minimum Fahrenheit	65.5	65.7	63.5	58.5	52.7	48.6	46.4	48.0	51.8	56.3	59.9	63.5

Source: Bureau of Meteorology

Australia is a vast continent with many different climatic zones. The average minimum and maximum temperatures are illustrated in the images below.



Source: © Copyright Commonwealth of Australia 2007, Bureau of Meteorology (ABN 92 637 533 532)



For more information weather throughout Australia please refer to the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) website [www.bom.gov.au].

Climate

Most of Australia's capital cities have a temperate climate, with mild winters and warm dry summers. Very hot days and cool nights can occur in summer. In the north, temperatures can get really hot, particularly in the summer months. Summer temperatures in the Outback regularly reach 50° Celsius. (122° f)

Rainfall

In northern Australia the weather is tropical with most rain falls from November to May. In the south of the country, most rain falls in June, July and August.

Sun Sense

Sun protection is a serious matter in Australia, as the Ultra Violet (UV) is very high at all times of the year. The UV exposure is at its greatest between 10am and 3pm so avoid skin exposure to the sun between these times. To avoid skin burn, never go outside without a broad spectrum sunscreen of at least SPF 30 and a hat, and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before sun exposure, and reapply regularly.

Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms are more common in Australia during the summer months. During thunderstorms, keep calm, bring children and pets indoors, close all windows and doors and secure loose outdoor items. Refrain from using the telephone during an electrical storm.

If you are caught outside during a thunderstorm:

- Take shelter: If you have a car, get in it. Or seek protection wherever nearby shelter is available.
- If no shelter is available then crouch down: stay away from tall objects and trees. Lightning can still strike you in open ground, but the trick is to be less of a target.

Natural Disasters

Natural disasters such as floods, bushfires and tropical cyclones occur occasionally across the Australian continent.

Comprehensive natural disaster warning systems are in place throughout Australia.

For more information

For comprehensive weather information, please visit the Australian Bureau of Meteorology website at www.bom.gov.au.



Fire Safety

Fire Danger

A fire danger period exists between November and April each year in Australia. This can be extended, depending on the seasonal weather conditions.

In the case of fire call emergency services on triple 0 (000) or 112 for mobile phones.

Bushfire Prevention

Please limit your use of fire.

- Use a fuel stove for cooking (outside of tents) when camping.
- Never leave fires unattended or unconfined.
- Cigarette butts cause bushfires. Do not drop them or throw them out of your car.
- Evacuate the area immediately if you see a bushfire.
- Avoid serious burns and flare-ups by extinguishing campfires with water, not dirt or sand.

Fire Restrictions

During fire danger periods there are fire restrictions that apply. Many regions are subject to total fire bans during fire seasons. Please adhere to these restrictions during your stay. For more information contact the fire brigade service in the area in which you are travelling.

In Case of Emergency

Call triple zero (000) for fire, police and ambulance assistance throughout Australia. From mobile phones it's 112 for non-emergency police attendance call 131 444.



If You Are Caught in a Bushfire

Check on likely fire conditions before venturing into an area that is or maybe affected by a bushfire. It is safer not to venture into an area if very high or extreme bushfire conditions are forecast.

If you are caught in a car:

- Pull over to the side of the road away from the fire, away from heavy fuel loads.
- Leave the car headlights on.
- Close all windows, turn off the air-conditioning
- As the fire approaches get down low and endeavour to cover any exposed skin (use blankets or towels etc.)
- Conditions inside the car will deteriorate progressively but should be safe for the time it takes a bushfire to pass.
- A petrol tank is extremely unlikely to explode.

If you are caught on foot:

- Try to move away from the fire by going across the slope and then downhill away from the fire
- Never try to outrun a fire by going uphill (Bushfires travel faster uphill).
- Never attempt to run through a fire unless:
 - The flames are only small - less than 1.2m
 - You can see safe ground close by
- Try to shelter from the fire by seeking bare ground or recently burnt ground
- If attempts to escape the fire fail take shelter by :
 - Seeking refuge in a creek or pool (never in an elevated tank)
 - Lying down and covering all bare skin
 - Try to shelter behind rocks or logs



Enjoying Nature

Park Information

Visit the ranger station or park information centre to obtain details on the best places to visit and any additional safety information for the park that you plan to visit.

Fires

Please limit your use of fire.

- Use a fuel stove for cooking (outside of tents).
- Never leave fires unattended or unconfined.
- Be aware of fire bans or restrictions in place.
- Cigarette butts cause bushfires. Do not drop them or throw them out of your car.
- Evacuate the area immediately if you see a bushfire.
- Avoid serious burns by extinguishing campfires with water, not dirt or sand.

Weather

Weather can be erratic and unpredictable. Bushwalkers should be aware of the risk of hypothermia as even in summer temperatures can drop below freezing at night in the mountains and weather can change very quickly.

Hiking

Be prepared if you plan to spend some time in the outdoors walking or hiking:

- Tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to return. Let them know when you return. Most parks have a sign in/sign out book – use it.
- Check the weather forecast and be prepared for unexpected changes in weather.
- Check the length and degree of difficulty of your planned walk. Consider using a local guide when taking long or difficult walks.
- Drink plenty of water (in warm weather 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.
- Read maps and signs, **STAY ON THE TRACK**, stay behind safety barriers and stay away from cliff edges.

Snakes

There are many venomous snakes in Australia. If you see a snake, do not interfere with it. Take another path. If you are bitten by a snake:

- Tie a tight bandage around the affected limb and keep still.
- Call triple zero (000) for Ambulance Emergency.

If you are bitten when hiking in a wilderness area, and carrying an EPIRB, activate it immediately.



Crocodiles

In the north of Australia, crocodiles are common in rivers, waterways and estuaries and in coastal waters. Read and obey warning signs.

As a general rule do not swim in creeks, rivers, billabongs in northern Australia where crocodiles are prevalent. Clean fish away from your camp and not at the water's edge.

Look for signs and do not enter waters where crocodiles may be present.

Sharks

Sharks can be found in ocean, river and canal waters throughout Australia in varying sizes.

Where possible, swim in patrolled areas where shark nets are used to keep dangerous animals away from humans.

Mosquitoes, Flies, Sandflies

Mosquitoes, flies, sandflies and other insects are common throughout Australia. Most are merely an annoyance. Stings and bites can cause itching and skin irritation. Use an insect repellent to deter insects, and wear appropriate clothing when insects are prevalent.

There is a number of mosquito borne diseases known to occur throughout Australia. Ross River Virus (RRV), Barmah Forest Virus (BFV) and Dengue Fever are three of the more common ones.

Mosquito-borne diseases can occur anywhere in Australia when conditions are warm enough for the viruses to be active and wet enough for the breeding of mosquitoes. It is important for people to prevent being bitten by mosquitos and avoid mosquito borne disease.

- Avoid being outdoors at dawn, dusk and at night when mosquitoes are active.
- Ensure insect screens are installed and use mosquito nets and mosquito-proof tents.
- Wear insect repellent containing diethyl toluamide (DEET) or picaridin, as well as loose, light-coloured protective clothing when outdoors.
- Ensure infants and children are protected against mosquito bites, with suitable clothing, bed nets or other forms of insect screening.

Spiders

Venomous spiders are found in Australia. While many spiders are relatively harmless, the funnel-web spider is deadly, and white-tail and red-back spiders can inflict painful bites, and present mortal danger to children. Treat all spider bites with great caution and seek immediate medical advice.

Roadside Wildlife

Kangaroos and other animals present significant danger when they move out in front of vehicles. Fatigued long-distance drivers are particularly at risk. Take care when driving in regional areas, particularly at sunrise and sunset when animals are most active.



Safety in Urban Areas

Australians enjoy a very safe environment and you can play your part in reducing crime.

Exercise General Caution

The same general cautions apply in Australian cities as in the rest of the world.

- Do not display valuables.
- Do not accept drinks from people in bars as these may be potentially spiked with drugs.
- Always take care when walking alone in cities at night.
- Please use appropriate accommodation when visiting Australian cities. Sleeping in parks and other public places can put you in grave danger, and is illegal in Australia.
- Do not carry large amounts of money. ATMs and banks are readily available in Australia cities.
- Protect passports and travel documentation carefully. Ensure that you lock them carefully in hotel safes, or carry them with you at all times.
- When travelling, close your vehicle windows and conceal all valuables including your purse, handbag, shopping, phone and laptop. When parking, lock your vehicle and don't leave your keys where they can be found.
- If you notice anything unusual or anyone acting suspiciously, report it to the police. Phone 131 444 for police assistance or triple zero (000) (or 112 from a mobile phone) for emergencies. If you have information relating to a crime, contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Employment

Many companies in Australia offer specific employment to travellers and backpackers who are holding relevant visas. When accepting offers of employment please ensure that they are legitimate offers from serious businesses. For more information contact the Department of Immigration and Citizenship www.immi.gov.au. Information on job opportunities can be found at www.jobsearch.gov.au.

Water Conservation

While you're on holiday in Australia, we need you to help us conserve our precious water. You can do this by keeping your showers short (less than four minutes), washing boats or vehicles with a bucket instead of a hose, cleaning fish in basins rather than running water.

Most Australian States are subject to significant water restrictions. Please adhere to these restrictions during your holiday.



Health

Australia is a remarkably healthy country in which to travel, considering such a large portion of it is in the tropics. Thanks to Australia's isolation and quarantine standards it is free of most tropical diseases and diseases of insanitation.

Few visitors will experience anything worse than an upset stomach. If you should need medical care, the standard of hospitals and quality of our health care system is very good. Travellers should have adequate travel insurance that includes health coverage.

There are medical centres and hospitals throughout all cities and towns. You can request to see a male or female doctor at any medical centre. There are many bilingual doctors throughout Australia. You can find contact details for a doctor or local medical centre through the local telephone directory or directory assistance.

Public Health Care

Medicare

Australia's public health care system is called Medicare. Eligibility for benefits is generally restricted to residents of Australia. While Australia does have reciprocal healthcare agreements with several countries, it is best to check before you leave home and to always have appropriate travel insurance.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are not required unless you have come from, or visited a yellow fever infected country or zone within six days before entering Australia. No other health certificate is needed.

Water

The tap water throughout Australia is of a standard suitable for drinking.

Sun Sense

Sun protection is a serious health matter in Australia, as the Ultra Violet (UV) is very high at all times of the year. The UV exposure is at its greatest between 10am and 3pm so avoid skin exposure to the sun between these times. To avoid skin burn, never go outside without a broad spectrum sunscreen of at least SPF 30 and a hat, and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before sun exposure, and reapply regularly.

In case of Emergency

In case of a health emergency call triple zero (000) for ambulance assistance throughout Australia. From mobile phones call 112.



Terrorism

Since September 2001, the Australian Government has made a strong commitment to fight terrorism and increase the security of all Australians.

In this environment we need more security measures to ensure the safety of the travelling public. The Australian Government has introduced many new transport security measures, such as passenger and baggage screening at airports.

When you travel you may be affected by transport security measures. You may encounter delays at airports at screening points or be asked to undertake an explosive trace detection test. Security measures can seem an inconvenience, but it is important to remember they are in place to protect us.

When travelling please remember to:

- be patient with queues or delays caused by security checks
- allow extra time for journeys
- do not leave packages or bags unattended
- do not pack prohibited items or dangerous goods.

To Report Suspicious Activity

- If you suspect or have knowledge of any terrorism please contact the Australian National Security Hotline on 1800 123 400 (you can remain anonymous) or email: hotline@nationalecurity.gov.au.
- If you wish to report suspicious activity and do not speak English well, please call the Translating and Interpreting Hotline on 131450 and ask them to contact the 24-hour national security hotline and translate for you.

For More Information

- For more information visit the Australia National Security website www.nationalecurity.gov.au.



What to do in case of emergency

Call 000 for emergency fire, police and ambulance assistance throughout Australia or if a crime is in progress. From mobile phones it's 112. For non-emergency police attendance call 131 444.



General Information for Visitors

Language and Translation Services

The official language in Australia is English.

Australia's largest telecommunications provider, Telstra offers a 24 hour translation and interpreter service. To access it, dial 13 14 50.

Electricity

Australia's electricity voltage is 240 volts AC. Some large hotels have power outlets at 110 volts AC, but if you're bringing 110-volt appliances into Australia, it's advisable to bring a small 110-volt transformer and a plug conversion kit.

Visas, Customs & Immigration

Non-Australian citizens (except those from New Zealand) need a valid visa to enter and spend time in Australia. The length of stay and purpose of your visit will determine the type of visa you are required to hold before you arrive. All applications must be made from outside Australia. For full details, please see the Department of Citizenship and Immigration website www.immi.gov.au.

Currency

Australian currency (AUD) is decimal, with the dollar as the basic unit (100 cents equals one dollar). Notes are in \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10 and \$5 denominations and coins are in \$2, \$1, 50c, 20c, 10c and 5c denominations.

Credit Cards

The most commonly accepted credit cards in Australia are MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Diners Club. You'll find plenty of banks and ATMs (automated teller machines) in cities and major regional centres, but they can be scarce in regional areas, so plan ahead if you're visiting outlying areas of rural Australia.

Taxes

Departure tax, also known as the Passenger Movement Charge, is prepaid with airline tickets. Children under 12 are exempt.

Tipping

Tipping is not widespread in Australia, and is limited only to some restaurants. If you receive really good service in a restaurant the recommended tip is 10 per cent of the bill.

Postal Services

Australia Post is the national postal service provider. For more information about the services provided please refer to the Australia Post website www.auspost.com.au

Drought and the Restrictions on the use of Water

In recent years, drought has been particularly harsh on Australian fresh water supplies. Many cities and states are under significant water restrictions. Please be aware of these and conserve water use wherever possible. For more information check with the local council of the city/town that you are visiting.



Disclaimer.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information on this handbook is as up-to-date as possible. The National Visitor Safety Steering Committee cannot accept any responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of this information, nor for any material on third party websites and cannot guarantee that any third party websites listed will be a suitable source of information.