

Pre-Departure Accommodation Guide

PLEASE READ THIS GUIDE CAREFULLY BEFORE LEAVING YOUR HOME COUNTRY

The information has been designed to help you to prepare for living and studying in Australia. It is generally helpful to know about the changes and differences you will experience so that you can be better prepared for this important transition.

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ECC CONTACT DETAILS

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Phone: +618 6279 1100
Fax: +618 6279 1111
Email: info@ECC.wa.edu.au
Web: www.ECC.wa.edu.au
CRICOS Code: 01312J
Office Hours
Monday-Friday: 8.00am-4.30pm
Closed Saturday and Sunday

24 HOUR EMERGENCY CONTACTS

ECU Security: 6304 3333
Fire/Police/Ambulance: 000 (emergency)
Police Communications: 131 444

ACCOMMODATION

Information on accommodation is provided on the ECC website. You must allow **a couple of weeks after arrival** to find suitable accommodation. ECC uses two companies to assist students with booking accommodation. All questions regarding Homestay accommodation should be sent directly to the accommodation provider that you wish to use:

WA Homestay Network – <http://ahnhomestay.com/ECC/>

PSA - <http://www.perthstudentaccommodation.com>

Another useful way of finding permanent accommodation is to check the 'West Australian' newspaper (Wednesday and Saturday are best), contact local real estate agents and check noticeboards located on campus as they often list available accommodation close to the campus.

Homestay

Full Board Homestay - this form of accommodation is offered by families or individuals in their established homes. Students are generally welcome to join in the daily activities of the household. Students are expected to pay 4 times the weekly rent in advance. Full board Homestay provides the student with two meals a day, furnished room and access to the other facilities of the house. The weekly board includes the cost of meals, gas, electricity, water and rent. Telephone/internet connections expenses are the responsibility of the student. Homestay providers used by ECC have Police Clearances and have been interviewed for suitability.

Share Housing/Renting

This can be in a flat, house or townhouse where the student lives with co-renters, often other students (Share House). Students generally rent a room, either furnished or unfurnished, with the use of the other facilities of the house. Expenses and responsibility for the upkeep of the house are shared between everyone living in the household. The issue of cooking, cleaning and shopping is negotiated between all members of the household.

The cost depends on the location, type of accommodation and the number of people living in the house. Prices will start from about \$150 per week/room in a shared house/apartment.

If you decide to share with people you don't know, talk to them about their habits and lifestyle to see if you think you will be able to get along and live with them. The initial cost of moving into a rented property includes:

- Two weeks rent in advance.
- Four weeks rent as a bond. This is refundable at the end of tenancy if the property remains in a good condition. The cost of any cleaning or repairs that need to be done is deducted from the bond. The real estate agent is required by law to deposit this bond in a secure account.
- One weeks rent as a letting fee. A non-refundable fee charged by the Real Estate Agent. It cannot be charged by private owners.
- Utilities connection fees.

LOOKING FOR ACCOMMODATION - RENTING

Inspecting the Place - Before renting you will need to visit the property to look at the facilities and see if it is suitable for you. You can leave a A\$50 deposit (for each key) with the real estate agent then go to look at the accommodation if you are interested. You may need to make an appointment with the real estate agent to view the property. At the property any appliances you see that will remain there (eg stove, fridge, heater, etc) should be in working order. Doors and windows should open as they are supposed to, water & shower working properly, toilet flushing, etc.

Applying for a Property – After the inspection, you may want to put in an application for the property. You will need to obtain and complete the application form from the agent or landlord. You do not have to give all the information asked for on the form but this may mean that you will have less chances of getting the place than those applicants who have supplied the information. When making an application, you should bring and be prepared to give copies of the following documents.

Important Documents

- Letter of Assurance of Financial Support from your parents or your sponsor, stating that they will be responsible for remitting money to you from overseas how much and how regular the payments will be.
- Details of three people who can act as your character references in Australia. You can also attach written copies of character references you have received in the past.
- Certified Letter from ECC stating that you are enrolled as a student and the expected duration of your course. Ask for the letter at the ECC Reception.
- Two weeks rent in advance.

Signing the Lease – When your application has been approved, the next step is to sign the lease on the property. The bond money and the first month's rent is payable on the day you sign the lease. The lease you sign is a legal document and you should read everything carefully before you sign it. If you do not understand anything ask the real estate agent. If you need help with translation, ask the real estate agent to arrange it for you on the day (beware you may have to pay for these services). Once the lease is signed, you will receive the keys to the property and your receipts from the agent. You must keep a copy of the lease for your own records.

Bond—the bond is a once-only payment and it is usually the same amount as your monthly rent. The bond money will be lodged with the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority, using the Bond Lodgment Form. You will receive written confirmation of your bond lodgment about two weeks later. Your bond is held as security against damage to the property, or rent outstanding, if everything is left in reasonable condition when you leave the premises, your bond will be returned to you in full.

Receipts—it is important to ask for a receipt/proof of payment when paying any money for bond, rent or other accommodation costs.

Rent – Most properties are advertised with a weekly rent. The proper way to determine how much you will be paying per calendar month is to multiply the weekly rent by 52 weeks, then divide the amount by 12 months. The final figure is the amount you are expected to pay per calendar month. Rent is always paid per calendar month in advance and it is your responsibility to do so on time. Most real estate agents will issue you with a Rent Card or bank deposit book to assist with paying the rent.

All rent payment receipts must be kept safely. If you cannot pay your rent on time you must inform your real estate agent in advance.

Condition Report – After you sign the lease, you will be given a Property Condition Report to complete and return. This form must be completed before you move into your new home. The form states the general condition of the premises at the date of your signing the lease as the real estate agent sees it.

You will be able to compare the state of your home to the comments on the condition report. If you disagree with these comments, make sure that you note it down.

This means that every mark on the wall, every broken tile and nail on the wall should be noted on the condition report. Bear in mind that this report will be used to assess the condition of the place after you move out. The condition reports must be returned to the real estate agent or landlord in three working days. Make sure you receive your copy of the report after the landlord signs it. Keep it in a safe place.

Connecting Utilities – You will need to connect the utilities at your new home – gas, electricity, telephone and water (check with your agent). Contact your local utilities suppliers (Western Power – electricity; Alinta Gas – gas; Water Corporation; Telstra – telephone) and let them know that you have just moved into the property. Your real estate agent can give you more information on how to contact your local suppliers. Connection charges are applicable and will appear on your first bill.

Furnishing your Home – most rental properties come unfurnished and you will need to buy your own furniture. There are a number of places where you can get good quality second hand items, but also check the ECC and ECU notice boards around campus for students who are selling items. Look in the 'Food and Shopping' section for information about different stores.

Sharing

As with rental accommodation, you should also inspect your share accommodation. Check that everything in your own room works. It is a good idea to check that you can share everything else in the house or flat with your flatmates (eg kitchen appliances, refrigerator, telephone, etc). Meet all your potential flatmates. Find out how the rent and bills are to be paid. You should also see about getting your name on the lease if the property you are going to move into is rented (talk to the Student Counsellor).

You will also need to find out how many weeks' notice is required if you want to move out. Most rooms in share accommodation are unfurnished, so you will need to supply your own bed and mattress, etc.

Students may like to reference the links below from The Good Universities Guide before entering into a shared accommodation arrangement:

- Tenancy advice (<http://www.gooduniversitiesguide.com.au/Latest-news/Life-at-university/Five-tenancy-tips-for-students#.VpXTdrZ96Uk>)
- Advantages and disadvantages of various types of accommodation (<http://www.gooduniversitiesguide.com.au/Support-Centre/Student-life/Student-accommodation#.VpXTkbZ96Uk>)

COST OF LIVING

Your particular lifestyle will determine your budget and the type of accommodation you will be happy with, but the following estimates don't allow for luxuries such as flights to other parts of Australia for a holiday, flights home or buying and running a car.

You will need approximately **A\$18,610 –A\$20,000** per year (\$350-400 per week) to cover your expenses, in addition to your tuition fees. The cost of textbooks, obtaining a driver's license and some of the "one off" type expenses when you first arrive need to be accounted for (i.e. bond on accommodation, household items, utility/telephone connection fees.) **Use this as a guide only.** Textbooks and stationery should be budgeted at approximately A\$200-A\$400 per semester and some money may be saved by purchasing second-hand books (advertisements are usually placed on the notice-boards around campus).

Establishment Costs

We recommend that you arrange to arrive in Australia with at least A\$1,000-A\$1,500 and you should also have access to a further A\$2,000 for your first week in Australia to cover costs relating to obtaining permanent accommodation, such as bond, rent in advance, utility connection and furnishings, etc.

Full-time students are entitled to cheaper fares on public transport. Bus and train fares vary but are about A\$2 per one way trip. Special SmartRider cards with student concession can be purchased which allow trips at discounted prices. These will be further explained at Orientation. Students are not able to apply for a SmartRider card until they have attended Orientation.

NOTE: Students are entitled to discounts on a variety of entertainment, food, etc upon proof of their Student ID card.

Living Expenses for one student:

Rent	\$150+ per week (minimum - room only in shared house)
<i>Plus</i>	
Food & Beverages	\$60-\$70 per week
Gas, Electricity & Water	\$20 per week
Telephone rental & local calls (NOT overseas calls)	\$20 per week
Public Transport	\$20-\$25 per week
Laundry	\$10 per week
Other:	\$60-\$80 per week (including clothes, entertainment, emergencies, medical)

NOTE: the above is a guide only.

FOOD AND SHOPPING

Tipping is not a general practice in Australia. However, if you believe you have received excellent service in a restaurant a small tip is always appreciated by the staff.

Bargaining

Prices in shops are generally fixed as bargaining is not part of the Australian culture. Remember when purchasing more expensive items, (stereos, computers, and new furniture) to shop around and compare prices as most retailers will match prices with other stores. When buying expensive items it may also be acceptable to ask for a discount. For example, many retailers will give a discount when paying in cash.

Shopping Hours

Most shops and department stores are open:

Monday-Friday: 9.00am - 5.30pm

Saturday: 9.00am - 1.00pm or 5.00pm

Sunday: 11.00am - 5.00pm

Thursday is late night shopping in suburbs where shops are open till 9.00 pm. Late night shopping in the city is on Friday.

Where to Shop

In the city and suburbs there are shopping complexes with a variety of food and clothing outlets and department stores such as Myer and David Jones. 'Budget'- style household goods and clothes can also be found in stores like Target, K-Mart and Big-W. Supermarkets like Coles, Woolworths and IGA offer grocery items, fresh vegetables and meat and some household items (plates, cooking implements, etc).

Markets are often a good place to pick up bargains offering fresh produce, arts and crafts as well as decorator items and clothing. These are often a great place to purchase those unique gifts to send back home.

There are 24-hour convenience stores in many petrol stations (Shell, BP, Ampol) which offer basic products but these can be expensive.

Once you have found permanent accommodation, second hand stores, such as Cash Converters or Salvation Army are a good source of cheap household goods and furniture.

Specialty Food

Being a multicultural society, Australia has many stores offering specialty foods and ingredients. You should be able to buy familiar products from your home country in specialist groceries stores located in the city and suburbs as well as from markets in Canning Vale, Fremantle and Wanneroo. Northbridge in the city is a popular area for a good range of restaurants for all types of international food.

All university campuses have cafeterias and coffee shops and there are a number of inexpensive international food halls and restaurants offering food from all over the world.

Alcohol

The purchase and consumption of alcohol is against the law for those under 18 years of age. Consumption of alcohol or being drunk in a public place is also against the law. Strict rules against "Drink Driving" apply in all Australian states and penalties and fines are very harsh. Please do not drive if you have been drinking alcohol.

TRANSPORT

Private transport

If your home country driver's license is in English and clearly states the type of vehicle(s) you are permitted to drive, you can use it for 3 months in Australia before changing to an Australian driver's license.

Public transport

Timetables will be available at Orientation. The public transport system is good but you will need to check timetables for routes and times. The cost of public transport depends on the type of ticket you buy and the amount of distance that is to be traveled. Full time students are eligible for concession fares. Student concession SmartRider cards can be purchased from the Transperth agencies. Travel by taxi is safe and reliable, but is expensive. All taxis are fitted with meters and prices are fixed.

How to get to ECC

Taxi

Mount Lawley Campus - Ask for Edith Cowan University Mt Lawley Campus, Bradford Street, Mt Lawley. It will cost about A\$20-\$25 from Perth city to the Mount Lawley Campus.

Joondalup Campus - Ask for Edith Cowan University Joondalup Campus, 270 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup. It will cost about A\$80-\$90 from Perth city to the Joondalup Campus.

Bus

Mount Lawley Campus - There is a regular bus service to the ML campus. When catching a bus, put your hand out to indicate to the bus driver to stop. Ask for a Transperth timetable at your hostel Reception, or visit the Transperth website for a Travel Planner: www.transperth.wa.gov.au

Route 19 (Yokine to Wellington St Bus Station)

Weekday and weekend services. Refer to the Northern 71 timetable.

Route 20 (ECU Mt Lawley to Morley Bus Station)

Weekday and Saturday services only. Refer to the Northern 71 timetable.

Route 885 (Wellington St Bus Station to ML campus)

Limited service on university days only from Wellington St Bus Station (limited stops service). Refer to the Northern 76 timetable.

Route 886 (Wellington St Bus Station to Alexander Heights via Marangaroo Dr & Illawarra Cr)

Weekday services only (limited stops service). Refer to the Northern 76 timetable.

Route 887 (Wellington St Bus Station to Alexander Heights via The Avenue & Illawarra Cr)

Weekday and weekend services (limited service). Refer to the Northern 76 timetable.

Route 889 (Wellington St Bus Station to Ballajura)

Weekday and weekend services (limited stops service). Refer to the Northern 76 timetable.

Joondalup Campus – Advisable to take the train as this is the quickest route via public transport from the city centre.

Train

Use coins to purchase a ticket before boarding the train. Trains leave about every 15–20 minutes.

Mount Lawley Campus - Catch a train to Perth Central Train station and walk to Wellington Street Bus Station (5 minutes). Catch the Route 885 (Wellington St Bus Station to ML campus) service. This is a limited service on university days only. Refer to the Northern 76 timetable.

Joondalup Campus – Catch a train to Perth Central Train station and then catch train Joondalup Line, Esplanade Station Platform 1 to Joondalup train station. From the Joondalup train station a free Cat bus is available to take you to the campus. Alternatively the campus is within a 5 minute walk from the train station.

If you are not sure, please ask somebody. Generally people in Perth are happy to assist with directions and locations.

When you arrive on the Mount Lawley campus, go to ECC Welcome Centre in Building 10.

When you arrive on the Joondalup campus, go to ECC Welcome Centre in Building 31.

EMPLOYMENT

If you wish to work, you will need to wait until you have enrolled. Once you have enrolled with ECC you can work up to 40 hours a fortnight while studying and full-time during semester breaks.

Opportunities for part-time employment in Perth are good but you will be competing with local students who may have better English and local knowledge. Jobs are often menial and low paid, such as cleaning and waiting on tables.

You should also consider the demands of your classes and private study. The competing demands of work and study can lead to anxiety and study problems particularly around exam time.

If you obtain employment while in Australia you must apply for a 'Tax File Number'. You will be asked to provide your tax file number when you complete an Employment Declaration form at the commencement of any employment. It is not compulsory to have or provide a tax file number, however, if you do not have one any income you earn will be taxed at a much higher rate.

Visit: <https://www.ato.gov.au>

Please note that even if you are to obtain 40 hours of work each fortnight you cannot possibly earn enough money from part-time work to pay your tuition fees and all of your living costs.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (CISWA)

The main function of the Council for International Students of Western Australia (CISWA) is to assist international students with settling in to life in Western Australia and their studies. The council consists of representatives from each of the universities and colleges, international student organisations, voluntary organisations and individuals.

CISWA produces a yearly guide for students titled 'Everyday Living in WA' which covers everything from consular representatives in Perth to popular restaurants and eateries. A reference copy is available from the ECC Student Counsellor. CISWA also plans social events for students including picnics, barbecues and day trips, and provides confidential advice and family support to those in need. For more information, visit <https://www.ciswa.com>

Religious worship

ECU, ECC's affiliated partner University, has Chaplains from different religious faiths, as well as a Muslim prayer room on each metropolitan campus. There are suitable venues available in Perth for the followers of many denominations. More information is available from ECC.