

Australia

SPECIFIC ACTIVITY: STUDY ABROAD

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This information is taken from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/australia>

Australia's current national terrorism threat level is 'probable'. Terrorists are very likely to try to carry out attacks in Australia. Attacks could be indiscriminate including in places visited by foreigners. You should be vigilant, keep up to date with local media reports and follow the advice of local authorities.

There is considered to be a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally against UK interests and British nationals, from groups or individuals motivated by the conflict in Iraq and Syria. You should be vigilant at this time.

Australia is prone to seasonal natural disasters including tropical cyclones, flash flooding, dust storms and bushfires (forest fires). Tropical Cyclones occur, mainly in Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia between November and April. You should monitor the progress of approaching storms and follow the advice of the local authorities.

Crime Make two copies of your passport's personal details page and leave one with friends at home. Take one copy with you, or upload it onto a secure online data storage site; this will help a speedier turnaround if your passport is lost or stolen.

The level of crime is no higher than in the UK. Be careful with personal possessions and travel documents in cities and popular tourist destinations. Avoid carrying everything in one bag. Don't leave bags unattended in vehicles, internet cafes, pubs or clubs. Theft from safety deposit boxes is common in the cheaper hotels and hostels. Be particularly vigilant at night in the busy tourist areas of Sydney like Kings Cross, down town George Street, Hyde Park and Centennial Park.

There have been some serious sexual assaults against British nationals in Australia. Take care in the town centre of Alice Springs at night. There have been a number of incidents of harassment, robberies and attacks (including sexual assault) on foreign tourists. Alcohol and drugs can lead to you being less alert, less in control and less aware of your environment. If you are going to drink, know your limit. Drinks served in bars overseas are often stronger than those in the UK.

Beware of online lettings scams in which prospective tenants are asked to transfer a deposit to an overseas bank account in return for keys to a rental property in Australia. British travellers have fallen victim to these scams.

You can reduce the risk of losing your passport by getting a proof of age card. This is an accepted form of ID for many services like opening bank accounts or entering licensed premises. By getting a card soon after you arrive you will limit the need to carry your passport with you.

If your passport is lost or stolen you may be able to get an Emergency Travel Document (ETD) from the nearest British Consulate. However, we can only issue an ETD for urgent travel, not for general identity purposes.

Local travel Australia is a huge country. If you're bushwalking or exploring national parks it can take hours to get help in the event of an emergency. The terrain and intense heat can have a severe impact on your capabilities. Take plenty of water and a means of rigging up shelter from the sun. The NSW Police Force website provides further advice on bush safety, most of which applies throughout Australia.

Australia is home to a number of dangerous animal species, from crocodiles, jellyfish and sharks to poisonous insects, spiders and snakes are found in many parts of the country. See the Wet Tropics Management Authority <http://www.wet Tropics.gov.au/home>

The Tourism Australia website has extensive information on travelling around the continent. The Australian Government's National Visitor Safety Handbook also contains comprehensive travel safety advice on Australia.

Swimming safety Rip currents are the main surf hazard for all beach users. They can occur at any beach, and can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea. Rip currents are directly responsible for 20 coastal drowning deaths and over 15,000 rescues in Australia each year. There are more British victims than any other foreign nationality, with as many as 400 British nationals rescued and up to 4 drowning each year.

Take the following simple precautions: - Always swim between the red and yellow flags - these indicate it is a supervised location where a lifesaving service is currently on duty. - Don't swim at unsupervised locations. - Read the safety signs - they indicate current and typical hazards for that location. - Ask a lifeguard for advice - they are there to provide safety advice and make your experience safe and enjoyable. - Always swim with a friend; never alone. - If you get into trouble, stay calm and attract attention by calling and waving your arm above your head. - Never swim after drinking alcohol or taking drugs - they impair your ability and judgement in the water.

Further guidance on beach safety is available on <http://sls.com.au/be-safe>

Rivers and pools can be subject to sudden flash flooding as a result of heavy rain elsewhere in the area. There have been cases of British nationals being injured by diving into water which was too shallow. Make sure that there is sufficient depth of water before diving, and always follow warning signs if present.

Road travel As a visitor, you can drive in Australia if you have both parts of your UK driving licence: the photo-card and paper licence. You may encounter difficulties if you only have one of these. You must carry your driving licence and passport when driving. If you intend to stay in Australia and you hold a permanent visa, you can drive using your UK licence for a maximum of 3 months, after which you must apply for a local licence. Make sure you have sufficient insurance, including if you borrow a car from a friend or relative. Hire car insurance often doesn't cover driving on unsealed roads; check your policy before you set off. In 2016 there were 1,293 road deaths in Australia. This equates to 5.3 road deaths per 100,000 of population and compares to the UK average of 2.8 road deaths per 100,000 of population in 2016.

Driving laws and regulations differ in each state/territory. Driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs is illegal. The penalties can be severe. You must wear a seat belt at all times. If you're hiring a car immediately on arrival be extra careful - you will be jetlagged and tired from your flight. Take regular rest breaks when driving long distances; there are many rest stops provided.

Prepare thoroughly if driving in remote outback areas, which can present unexpected hazards. Ensure you have a roadworthy vehicle fitted with GPS and two spare tyres. Take good maps and extra food, water and fuel. Plan your route carefully and seek local advice before you set out. Leave your route details and expected time of return with the local tourist authorities, police, your hotel/hostel, or friends and relatives and let them know when you've arrived safely.

Check road conditions before beginning your journey; stay with your vehicle if it breaks down; and avoid travelling in extreme heat conditions. Sudden storms and strong winds can make driving difficult. Take particular care when driving on unsealed roads, 4WD tracks and desert/beach roads. Northern Territory Police have in the past warned tourists to stay off unsealed tracks in remote areas of Central Australia following reports of stranded motorists.

Following a number of serious accidents, all vehicles on Fraser Island must observe a maximum speed of 80km/h on beaches and 30km/h in towns. 4WD vehicles must carry no more than 8 occupants (including the driver) and all luggage must be carried inside the vehicle. Avoid driving at night and be aware of beach hazards like ditches created by the surf. Fraser Island is unique but remote, and emergency services can take many hours to reach an accident. Carry a well-stocked first-aid kit and personal medication as there is no pharmacy on the island.

Mobile phones The mobile phone network generally works well in cities and large towns but coverage elsewhere can be very limited or non-existent. If you're travelling to remote areas, check with your phone provider about coverage. You can use your UK mobile phone in Australia if global roaming has been activated, but making and receiving calls can be expensive. Many visitors prefer to buy an Australian SIM card on arrival. Australian SIM cards are available at some Australian airports, and at convenience stores and supermarkets.

Political situation Keep up to date with local and international developments and avoid any demonstrations or large gatherings of people.

Before travelling read [this advice page for LGBT travellers](#). The [Visit Gay Australia website](#) is a useful travel planning resource and you can find more detail on LGBT issues on the [Australian Human Rights Commission website](#).

Hazard	Control measures
Heavy rain and tropical cyclones can cause flooding in some areas.	Monitor local and international weather updates from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) . You can also access the Australian Bureau of Meteorology website for updates. For further information see Tropical Cyclones .
Forest/bush fires: Bushfires are common in the summer months from November to February, but	You should check with local State authorities for current bushfire information: Victoria ; South Australia and New South Wales .

can happen unexpectedly at any time of the year.	
Water sports, beach safety: Rip currents for all beach users; surfing accidents;	Follow local advice and local beach advice
Wildlife: Australia is home to a number of dangerous animal species, from crocodiles, jellyfish and sharks to poisonous insects and snakes.	Take due care. The West Tropics Management Authority website has information on dangerous marine life and dangerous animals
Crime:	Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals; avoid lonely and isolated areas.
Terrorism: There is a general threat from terrorism in Australia. Attacks could be indiscriminate including in places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers.	See https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/australia/terrorism
Travel around Australia: There are extremely remote outback areas, which can present unexpected hazards. If you intend bushwalking in or exploring national parks you must be aware that the majority of these are in remote areas and it can take hours to reach help. The terrain and intense heat can have a severe impact in reducing your capabilities.	Plan your trip with care and seek and follow local advice on what precautions to take. In addition, when travelling to remote tourist areas of the outback, it is essential to leave your route details and expected time of return with the relevant local tourist authorities or police, your hotel/hostel, or with friends and relatives. Ensure that you also notify them if your travel plans change and when you finally return. Take plenty of water and a means of rigging up a shelter from the sun. The NSW Police Force website provides further advice on bush safety, most of which applies throughout Australia.

Quarantine

Australia has strict quarantine rules in order to keep out pests and diseases that could affect plant, animal and human health. All luggage is x-rayed on arrival. Any items of concern are further inspected, treated and if necessary confiscated and destroyed. Breaches of quarantine regulations can result in large fines.

You will be given an incoming passenger card on the plane, on which you must declare any food or goods of plant or animal origin, including nuts, dried fruit and vegetables, herbs and spices, biscuits, cakes and confectionery, teas, coffees and milk-based drinks and sporting equipment (including camping gear). A full list can be found on the [Department of Agriculture website](#).

You will also be asked to declare whether you have 'visited a rural area, or been in contact with, or near, farm animals outside Australia in the past 30 days'.