

FAHAN
SCHOOL



International Students

CRICOS No. 00476G

Additional Information for International Students

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WELCOME TO TASMANIA

An island lying 240km off the south-east corner of the Australian mainland, Tasmania is the smallest of Australia's six states. Tasmania is surrounded by smaller islands, including King, Flinders and Bruny islands. The State has a total area of 68,331 km² and is separated from the Australian mainland by Bass Strait. Tasmania was originally known as Van Diemen's Land and is the second oldest of the Australian colonies (after New South Wales). The state is known for its wild and beautiful landscapes, welcoming people, temperate climate, world-class food and wine, rich history and a relaxed island lifestyle.

Approximately 40 per cent of the State is protected wilderness, marine reserves, or nature reserves. A large part of this reserved area has been granted World Heritage status by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Hobart

Hobart was established in 1804 on a natural deepwater harbour on the Derwent River in the south east of the island. In its early days, Hobart was a major whaling port and shipbuilding centre. Today it boasts a relaxed yet dynamic lifestyle. Hobart is Tasmania's largest city with a population of just over 200,000 people who enjoy the city's unique blend of scenery, heritage and culture.

SEASONS AND WEATHER

Unlike many parts of Australia, Tasmania enjoys four distinct seasons. The surrounding oceans give Tasmania a moderate climate without the scorching heat of many parts of Australia or the deep freeze winters that effect northern hemisphere countries at similar latitudes.

Summer

December to February - summer is the season of fun and festivals such as the Launceston Festivale, the Hobart Taste Festival, and the North-West's athletics carnivals. The average temperature in summer is a moderate 23 degrees, but can reach the high 30's. Even in cooler temperatures, it is important to realise that Tasmania's sun is intense and that hats, sunscreen and sunglasses are necessary between 11am and 3pm each day.

Autumn

March to May - autumn is a settled season with calm, sunny days and blue skies. Native and European deciduous trees blaze red, orange and gold and the State's mouth-watering produce is at its best. This is often a good time to visit Tasmania with warm days and cool nights.

Winter

June to August - winter brings a dusting of snow on highland peaks and evenings spent sitting by open fires. Days are often crisp with beautiful clear blue skies. You will need to dress warmly, and always be prepared for a brief shower of rain.

Spring

September to November - spring can be windy and wet, but remember - summer is just around the corner. Gardens around the State look magnificent at this time as they come into bloom. This is the time of year where you can literally experience four seasons in one day – so dress for all occasions.



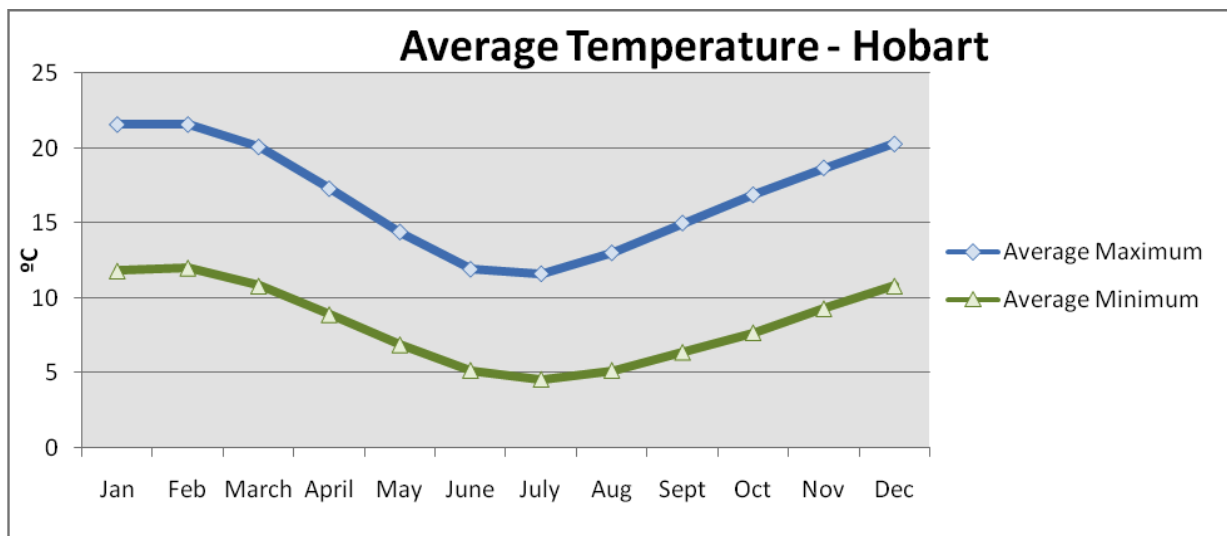
Rainfall

Rainfall varies dramatically across the State. Mountainous parts of the west coast can record over 3500 mm per annum while parts of the east coast and Midlands receive less than 600mm per annum. The rain on the west coast creates perfect conditions for the largest tract of temperate rainforest in the southern hemisphere. Hobart has an average of 626mm (24 inches) of rainfall per annum and is Australia's second-driest capital city after Adelaide.

Daylight

Hobart has the most daylight hours of any Australian capital city during summer with 15.2 hours at the summer solstice. That's two-and-a-half more hours of daylight than Darwin receives on a summer day, and an hour more than Sydney. In mid-winter Hobart's daylight shrinks to approximately nine hours per day. Tasmania observes 'daylight savings' in summer, when the clocks are put forward by one hour to make the most of the long days. The time-zone is known as Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST), and is GMT+10. During daylight savings it moves to GMT+11.

Temperature



Source: Bureau of Meteorology, 2008

Further comprehensive information on Tasmania's weather can be obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology website (www.bom.gov.au)

QUARANTINE

Australia, and particularly Tasmania, is free from many agricultural pests and diseases. This gives our agricultural producers a significant competitive advantage. As a result Australia has very strict laws relating to the importation and/or possession of certain goods. The *Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service* (AQIS) screens every piece of luggage brought into Australia. This ensures that the quarantine risk to Australia's agricultural industries and unique environment is minimized (source www.aqis.gov.au). Tasmanian authorities also restrict plant and animal products from being brought into the state. This includes fresh fruit and vegetables. For further information contact the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service Phone: (03) 6233 2635

Email: pr@aqis.gov.au Web: www.aqis.gov.au

CUSTOMS

For information about Australia's duty free allowance, and restrictions on what you can bring into the country, visit the Australian Customs Service website – www.customs.gov.au

When travelling to Australia, please be aware that if you are carrying a total of AUS \$10,000 or more in cash of any currency, you MUST declare the money on your Incoming Passenger Card and when questioned by Australian Customs Officials upon arrival. A failure to declare this money may result in the money being taken and you being arrested and prosecuted. It is not an offence to bring money into Australia. The offence is not declaring the money.

ELECTRICITY

The electrical current in Australia is 220 – 240 volts, AC 50Hz. The Australian three-pin power outlet is different from many other countries so you may need an adapter, which can be purchased at specialist electrical shops and at airports. You may also need a voltage converter if your appliances are 110 volts.

TELEPHONES

Calling Emergency Services

POLICE	000
FIRE	000
AMBULANCE	000

In Australia dial **000** from any phone for fire, police or ambulance services. **112** may also be dialled from mobile phones. Dialling **112** will override key locks on mobile phones and therefore save time.

Emergency Translation

For translation service in an emergency situation dial **1300 655 010**

Public Telephones

The cost of local calls is 50 cents (AUD) with most phones accepting coins and prepaid telephone cards. Long distance call charges vary depending on time of day and distance.

Sundays are an excellent day to make interstate or international calls due to all day discount rates.

Pre Paid telephone cards offer competitive calling rates to all countries 24 hours per day.

Pre Paid Telephone Cards cost \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$50 and may be purchased at most newsagencies, post offices and convenience stores.

Mobile Telephones

There are many companies offering mobile telephones and services. To enter a mobile phone contract you will need certain Australian identification and a credit rating in Australia, so pay-as-you-go may be the option for you initially. Some international mobiles can be used in Australia, but they must be unlocked first. A few of the larger companies who provide networks in Tasmania are listed below, but note there are many providers you can locate using the Yellow Pages. For a comparison of mobile phone plans in Australia see: <http://www.mobiles.com.au/mobile-phone-plans/>

Telstra – telephone 125 111
www.telstra.com

Optus – telephone 1300 301 937
www.optus.com.au

Vodafone – Telephone: 1300 650 410
www.vodafone.com.au

Making 1800/13/1300 telephone calls in Australia

Telephone numbers beginning with 1800 are free calls if using a private landline, or the same cost as a local call if using a public telephone. Numbers beginning 13 or 1300 are charged at local call rates. Mobile telephone rates apply to calls from mobile telephones.

Making Overseas Calls from Australia

To make an international phone call, you will first need to dial 0011, followed by the country code (ie. 44 for the UK). You then drop the first 0 from the phone number. For example, a UK telephone number 0207 012 3456 would be 0011 44 207 012 3456. You may see an international number written as +44 207 012 3456 – in this case you will just need to add the 0011 prefix.

Calling Cards

Using a calling card can be a cheaper option to call overseas. These can be purchased from most newsagencies or online. There are lots to choose from, so you will need to remember a couple of things when purchasing -

- Choose a card with a free access number and a one-off connection rate, otherwise you might find yourself paying per minute as well as for the call.
- Find out which one has the lowest call rate to the country you wish to call.
- Remember that cards usually have an expiry date, so remember to read the small print.

Telephone Directories

White Pages (www.whitepages.com.au) – Residential listings

Yellow Pages (www.yellowpages.com.au) – Commercial listings

You can also call directory assistance on 1223.

TRANSPORT

Tasmania is serviced by excellent city and rural bus services. Fares and routes are available on the applicable website.

Bus Services

Hobart Coaches (Hobart regional)- www.hobartcoaches.com.au

Merseylink (Devonport) - www.merseylink.com.au

Metro Tasmania (Hobart, Launceston and Burnie) - www.metrotas.com.au

Tasmanian Redline Coaches (intrastate/tours) - www.tasredline.com.au

Tigerline Tours/TassieLink (intrastate/tours) - www.tigerline.com.au

Taxis

United Taxis - 131 008

Yellow Cab Co - 131 924

Taxi Combined - 132 227

Hobart Yellow Water Taxi - www.hobartwatertaxis.com.au

Airlines

Tasmania is serviced by 5 commercial airlines, with over 400 flights a week coming to the island. Melbourne is one hour away, and Sydney is one hour 50 minutes. Flights also fly direct to Adelaide and Brisbane. Tasmania also has regional airlines servicing King and Flinders islands as well as the south-west coast.

Qantas - www.qantas.com

Virgin Blue - www.virginblue.com

Jetstar - www.jetstar.com

Regional Express - www.rex.com.au

Tasair - www.tasair.com.au

Tiger Airways - www.tigerairways.com

Airlines of Tasmania - www.airtasmania.com.au

HEALTH

Prescription Drugs

If you take any prescription medicines ensure you have a letter from your doctor with details of your medical condition and the medication you are taking. Prescription drugs are available at pharmacies and chemists but you must have a prescription from a doctor if you need treatment or more of your medication.

Sun Safety

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. In fact, one in every two Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer at some point during their lifetime. The good news is, it can be prevented. By minimising your exposure to the sun's damaging ultraviolet radiation (UVR), you can protect your skin and prevent the development of skin cancer.

Sun Protection

Skin cancer and skin damage are caused by being exposed to the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation (UVR). The key to preventing skin cancer is to protect your skin from the sun by practising sun safe behaviours. There are **six simple steps** you can follow to reduce your risk of skin cancer and protect your skin:

1. Minimise your time in the sun between 10am and 3pm
2. Seek shade
3. Wear suitable clothing that provides good sun protection
4. Choose a broad brim, legionnaire-style or bucket-style hat that will protect your face, neck and ears
5. Wear UV protective sunglasses
6. Apply SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before you go out into the sun.

Lifeline

Anyone can call Lifeline. The service offers a counselling service that respects everyone's right to be heard, understood and cared for. They also provide information about other support services that are available in communities around Australia. Lifeline telephone counsellors are ready to talk and listen no matter how big or how small the problem might seem. They are trained to offer emotional support in times of crisis or when callers may be feeling low or in need of advice.

Lifeline's **13 11 14** service is staffed by trained volunteer telephone counsellors who are ready to take calls 24-hour a day, any day of the week from anywhere in Australia. These volunteers operate from Lifeline Centres in every State and Territory around Australia.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

Overseas student health cover (OSHC) is insurance that provides cover for the costs of medical and hospital care which international students may need while in Australia and is mandatory for international student visa holders. OSHC will also cover the cost of emergency ambulance transport and most prescription drugs.

How do I get OSHC?

Fahan School will arrange your OSHC with Medibank Private on arrival, which will cover you for the duration of your studies at Fahan. Students may also choose to take out additional cover in the form of Extra OSHC. Visit <http://www.medibank.com.au:80/Client/StaticPages/OSHCHome.aspx>

If you come to Australia on a visa other than a student visa and undertake a **short course of study of three months duration or less** you will not be eligible for OSHC. It is wise to purchase travel or private medical insurance in this case.

What am I covered for?

OSHC provides a safety net for medical expenses for international students, similar to that provided to Australians through Medicare. Additionally, OSHC includes access to some private hospitals and day surgeries, ambulance cover and benefits for pharmaceuticals. You can download details from Medibank Private at <http://www.medibank.com.au:80/Client/StaticPages/OSHCHome.aspx>

Dental and Optical

Dental and optical health services are **not covered by your OSHC** unless you take out extra cover. If you need to see a dentist or optometrist you will need to make an appointment and pay the full fee of this service.

How do I use my OSHC card?

If you need to visit a doctor or medical centre, show your card at the end of the visit. You will be charged the doctor's fee and the government fee component of that may be processed by the medical centre. If the medical centre is not able to process the government fee, pay the total amount, keep the receipt and you can claim the government fee back from your OSHC provider.

How do I make a claim?

Download a claim form from www.medibank.com.au or obtain one from a Medibank store. Complete the form and attach the bill (if your account is unpaid) or the bill and receipt (if your account is paid). Before you lodge a claim it is a good idea to take a photocopy of the form and any bills or receipts you provide to Medibank Private. You can lodge your claim form in two ways:

Mail your form

Send your completed claim form together with relevant bills and / or receipts to:
Medibank Private
GPO Box 9999
Hobart TAS 7001

Visit a Medibank store

Simply attach your bills and/or receipts to the claim form and lodge it at a Medibank store. Your claim will be processed as soon as possible.

General Practitioners (GPs)

In Australia you do not have to go to a hospital to see a doctor. You can see a doctor (also known as a **GP – General Practitioner**) in their private practice or medical centre, with part or the entire doctor's fee being covered by Medicare or OSHC. **You must make an appointment to see a GP.** It is important to note that some GP surgeries will request full payment from you at the time of consultation and you will need to present the receipt to claim the rebate back from your health cover provider.

Interpreter Services

We are lucky in Australia to have a variety of healthcare professionals from many different cultural backgrounds, so you may be able to see a doctor who speaks your first language. However, if you are having difficulties communicating with your doctor, the **Translation and Interpreter Service (TIS)** can be used. For more information visit www.immi.gov.au or phone **131 450**

SETTING UP A BANK ACCOUNT

Fahan staff will assist you in setting up your own bank account at the Commonwealth Bank.

Banking Hours

Most bank branches are open from Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:00pm (except on public holidays). Some branches have extended trading hours during the week and may be open Saturdays (check with your individual bank). ATMs remain open 24 hours a day. However, you should be aware of your personal safety if accessing cash from an ATM at night in quiet areas where there are not a lot of people around.

LAWS AND SAFETY IN AUSTRALIA

Obeying the Law

One of the reasons we have such a wonderful lifestyle in Australia is due to our representative democracy, the separation of powers, and our respect for the rule of law. We have a lot of laws in Australia and as a result, society runs smoothly.

You can find a comprehensive outline of Australian law and the legal system at: www.australia.gov.au

Legal Services & Advice

Dobson, Mitchell & Allport Lawyers
59 Harrington Street
Hobart 7000
Ph: 6210 0099
www.doma.com.au

Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania
158 Liverpool Street
Hobart 7000
Ph: 6236 3800
www.legalaid.tas.gov.au

Alcohol, Smoking, & Drugs

It is illegal for people below 18 years of age to be sold alcohol, cigarettes or other tobacco products in Australia. Smoking is prohibited inside all Australian airports, on all buses, trains, ferries, and in most public buildings. Fahan School is a non-smoking campus and no student is permitted to have alcohol or drugs on the school premises.

Policies & Procedures

Policies and Procedures are available from the Fahan School website at www.fahan.tas.edu.au/international with copies in Nateby, the Senior Boarding Residence and Careers Room. Copies are available from the Assistant to the Principal.

Attendance

International students must attend all lessons and required activities with a minimum of 80% attendance in order to comply with conditions of their student visa. The school will notify the Department of Immigration if an international student's attendance is lower than 80%.

Current Address Details

Students on an International Student Visa MUST immediately notify the School if they or their parents/guardians change home or mailing addresses.

Privacy

Information provided by applicants may be made available to Commonwealth and State agencies pursuant to obligations under the ESOS Act 2000 and the National Code.

QUICK GUIDE TO KEY PERSONNEL

WHO TO SEE

ISSUES

ACADEMIC

Deputy Principal

Questions about content of units, teaching procedures, assessment.

Deputy Principal

Questions about the program as a whole, academic regulations, difficulties with study, decisions to defer from study (**Inform Assistant to the Principal**)

Tutor/Deputy Principal

Help with reading, writing, note taking, preparation for exams & assignments

ADMINISTRATIVE

Assistant to the Principal

Visa problems, financial problems, enrolment, health care/insurance problems, change of address.

Deputy Principal

Academic progression, timetable, subjects.

PERSONAL

Director of Residence/Deputy Principal/Tutor

Problems with relationships, home-sickness, depression, harassment, discrimination issues.

Deputy Principal

Examination / study adjustments.

Director of Residence/Assistant to the Principal

Accommodation issues

EMERGENCY 000 or 112 from a mobile phone (to override key locks)

Government Departments

DIAC – Department of Immigration & Citizenship
131 881 www.immi.gov.au

LIBRARY SERVICES

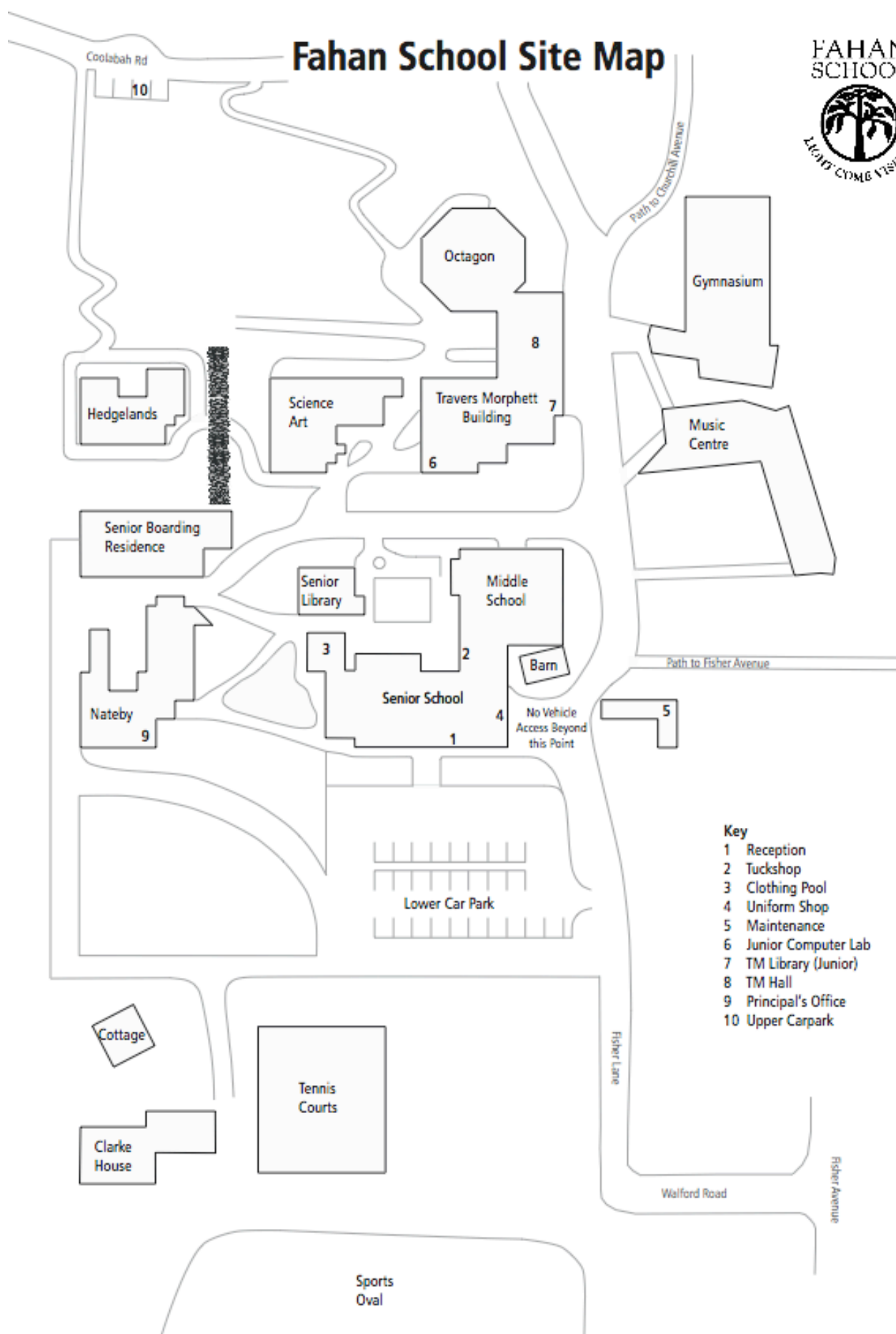
Fahan School has two libraries: The Travers Morphett Library for students in the Junior School and the Senior Library for students in Years 7-12. Both libraries are staffed by teacher librarians and are well resourced including a number of computers. There is also a private study area in the Senior Library.

COMPUTER LABS

Fahan is an Apple Accredited School. Both the Junior and Senior Computer Labs have the latest Macintosh hardware and software. In addition to the labs, there are a large number of laptops available for student and class use.

Fahan School Site Map

FAHAN
SCHOOL



- Key**
- 1 Reception
 - 2 Tuckshop
 - 3 Clothing Pool
 - 4 Uniform Shop
 - 5 Maintenance
 - 6 Junior Computer Lab
 - 7 TM Library (Junior)
 - 8 TM Hall
 - 9 Principal's Office
 - 10 Upper Carpark

Adjusting to Life in Australia:

While living and studying abroad may be an exciting adventure, it can also present a range of challenges. Having decided to study and live in Australia you will be undertaking adjustments in many areas of your life including cultural, social and academic. It is also important to remember that while these changes are occurring you will be embarking upon a new course of study (for many of you in a different language) and be away from your usual supports, networks and resources. Adjustment to a new country and culture is a process that occurs gradually and takes time. The values, beliefs, traditions and customs of your home country may vary greatly from those in Australia and adapting to the Australian way of life may take some time. This advice may help:

➤ **Listen, observe and ask questions**

Adjustment to a new culture and way of life takes time. Allow yourself time to observe those around you and patterns of both verbal and non-verbal communication. Don't be afraid to ask questions if there are things you do not understand, as this will reduce the chance of confusion or misunderstandings.

➤ **Become involved**

Make an effort to meet people and become involved in groups both on campus and in the wider community. Maintain an attitude of openness to new situations and experiences. Establishing friendships and joining groups is the best way to experience and learn about Australian culture and will certainly mean you have a richer and more enjoyable time here.

➤ **Try to maintain a sense of perspective**

When confronted with difficulties remind yourself that living and studying abroad is a challenge and it is normal to feel stressed, overwhelmed and out of your depth at times. Try to recall or make a list of the reasons you initially wanted to study abroad in the first place. Also, listing positive events or changes within yourself that have occurred since you arrived may also assist with getting things in perspective.

➤ **Keep lines of communication open with those at home**

Communicating with those at home regularly about your experiences of study and life in Australia, through emails, telephones and letters, is vital. Not only does it help to keep you connected with important social supports, it also assists your friends and family to understand your experiences, which will smooth the transition when you return home.

➤ **Sense of humour**

Importantly, remember that living in a different culture means you will inevitably find yourself in a range of unusual and often confusing situations. Being able to laugh in these situations will remind you that it takes time to understand different cultures and that it is ok to make mistakes.

➤ **Ask for help**

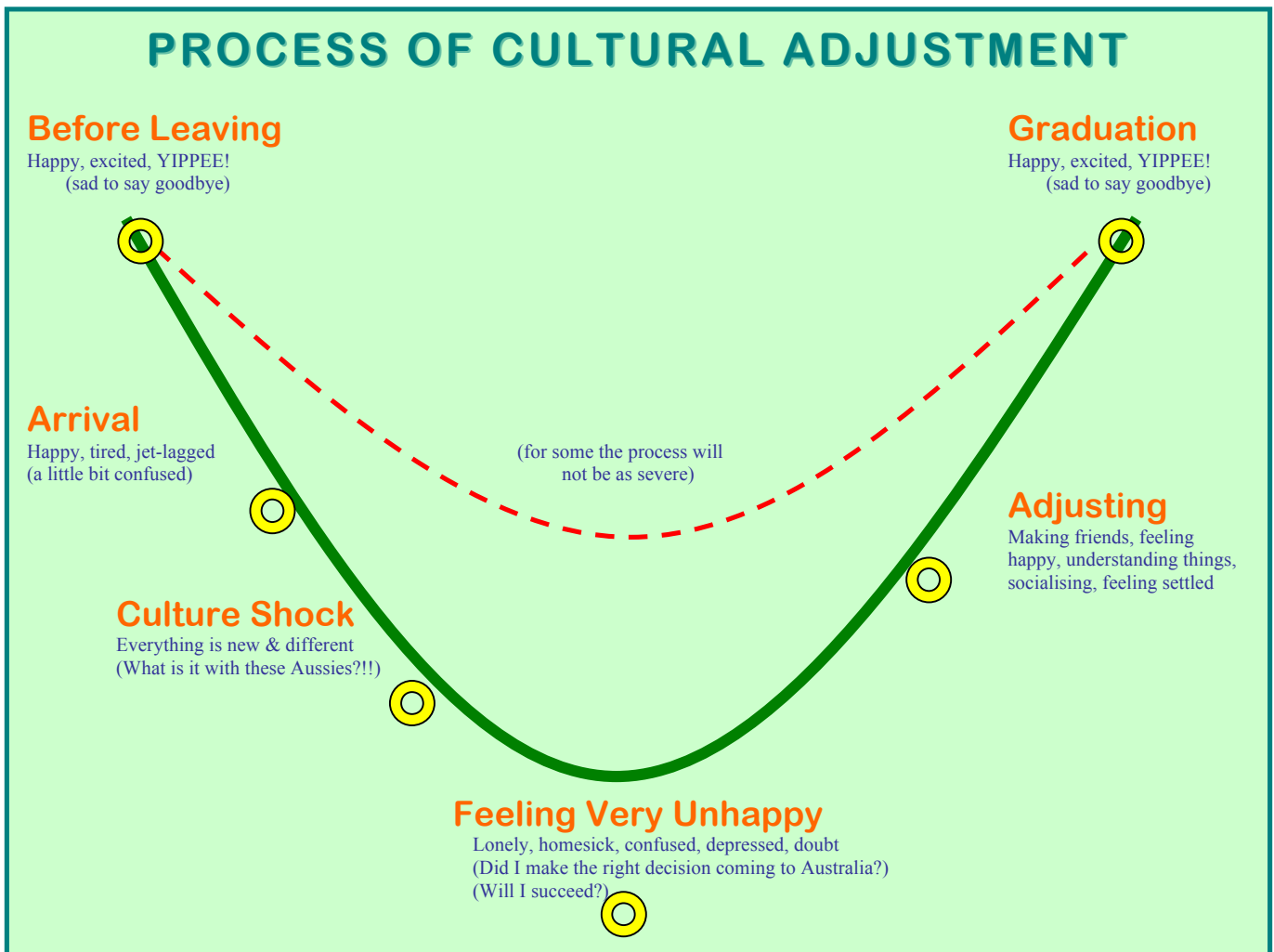
Don't be afraid to ask for assistance or support if you need it. Fahan staff are here to ensure you have a successful and enjoyable time in Australia.

➤ **Finally, relax and enjoy the journey!**

(Source: Macquarie University)

Culture Shock:

Culture shock is the feeling of being out of place in an unfamiliar environment. The initial excitement of moving to a new country often subsides when different cultural expectations challenge you to attend to daily responses and behaviours previously taken for granted. The potential stress of dealing with these persistent challenges can result in feelings of hostility and frustration with your host country as well as a profound longing for home.



AUSTRALIAN CULTURE:

Social Customs

Greeting People

When meeting someone for the first time, it is usual to shake the person's right hand with your right hand. People who do not know each other generally do not kiss or hug when meeting. When you first meet someone, it is polite not to talk about personal matters.

Many Australians **look at the eyes of the people** they are talking with. They consider this a sign of respect, and an indication that they are listening. Do not stare at the person for a long time.

You can address a new acquaintance using their title and family name. You may use their first name when they ask you to or use it in the introduction. In the workplace and among friends, most Australians tend to be informal and call each other by their first names.

Clothing Customs

The types of clothing that people wear reflect the diversity in our society just as much as the variation in climate. There are no laws or rules on clothing, but you must wear certain clothing for work situations. Most workplaces have dress standards.

Outside of the work situation, clothing is an individual choice; many people dress for comfort, for the social situation or the weather. Clubs, movie theatres and other places require patrons to be in neat, clean clothes and appropriate footwear.

Many Australians live close to the beach and the sea. On hot days, they may wear little clothing on the beach and surrounds. This does not mean that people who dress to go to the beach or swimming have low moral standards. It means that this is what we accept on and near our beaches.

People from other countries can choose to wear their national dress. They may be religious or customary items and include monks' robe, a burqa, a hijab or a turban. As a tolerant society with people from many different cultures, clothing is a part of cultural beliefs and practices that is encouraged.

Polite Behaviour

'Please' and 'thank you' are words that are very helpful when dealing with other people, and buying goods or services. When asked if you would like something, like a cup of tea, it is polite to say, 'Yes please', or just 'please' if you would like it, or 'no, thank you' if you do not. When you receive something, it is polite to thank the person by saying 'thank you'. Australians tend to think that people who do not say 'please' or 'thank you' are being rude. Using these words will help in building a good relationship.

Sometimes a sensitive issue may come up in conversation. Not to talk may seem rude. It is more polite to say 'sorry, it is too hard to explain' than to ignore a question.

Australians often say, 'Excuse me' to get a person's attention and 'sorry' if we bump into them. We also say, 'Excuse me' or 'pardon me' if we burp or belch in public or a person's home.

You should always try to **be on time** for appointment and other visits. If you realise you are going to be late, try to contact the person to let them know. This is very important for visits to professionals as you may be charged money for being late or if you miss the appointment without notifying them before the appointment time.

Most Australians blow their noses into a handkerchief or tissue, not onto the footpath. This is also true for spitting. Many people will also say, 'Bless you' when you sneeze. This phrase has no religious intent.

Australian Slang

Much common word usage or 'slang' may seem strange to people new to Australia. Slang words start from many different sources. Some words are shortened versions of longer words. Many were expressions already used by migrants who came from the north of England. If you are unsure what an expression means, it is all right to ask the person who said it to explain. Some common expressions are:

- **Bring a plate** - when you are invited to a party and asked to 'bring a plate', this means to bring a dish of food to share with your host and other guests. Take the food to the party in any type of dish, not just a plate, and it is usually ready to serve. This is common for communal gatherings such as for school, work or a club. If you are unsure what to bring, you can ask the host.
- **BYO** - when an invitation to a party says 'BYO', this means 'bring your own' drink. If you do not drink alcohol, it is acceptable to bring juice, soft drink or soda, or water. Some restaurants are BYO. You can bring your own wine to these, although there is usually a charge for providing and cleaning glasses called 'corkage'.
- **Arvo** - This is short for afternoon. 'Drop by this arvo,' means please come and visit this afternoon.
- **Fortnight** - This term describes a period of two weeks.
- **Barbeque, BBQ, barbie** - outdoor cooking, usually of meat or seafood over a grill or hotplate using gas or coals. The host serves the meat with salads and bread rolls. It is common for a guest, when invited to a BBQ, to ask if they should bring anything.
- **Snag** - The raw type sausages usually cooked at a BBQ. They can be made of pork, beef or chicken.
- **Chook** - The term chook means a chicken, usually a hen.
- **Cuppa** - a cup of tea or coffee 'Drop by this arvo for a cuppa' means please come and visit this afternoon for a cup of tea or coffee.
- **Loo or dunny** - These are slang terms for toilet. If you are a guest in someone's house for the first time, it is usually polite to ask permission to use his or her toilet. 'May I use your toilet please?' Some people ask, 'Where's the loo?'
- **Fair dinkum** - honest, the truth. 'Fair dinkum?' when used as a question means, 'is it really true?'
- **To be crook** - to be sick or ill.
- **Flat out** - busy.
- **Shout** - to buy someone a drink. At a bar or a pub when a group of friends meet, it is usual for each person to 'shout a round', meaning buy everybody a drink. Each person takes a turn at buying a 'round'. It is also acceptable to say that you do not drink (alcohol) by saying that you are a 'teetotaler'. This also means you are not obliged to shout.
- **Bloke** - a man. Sometimes if you ask for help, you may get an answer to 'see that bloke over there'.
- **How ya goin?** 'How are you going?' means how are you, or how do you do? It does not mean what form of transport you are taking. Sometimes it can sound like 'ow-ya-goin-mate'.

For more information on Australian slang visit: www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/slang

Public Holidays & Special Celebrations:

Australians hold certain days each year as special days of national meaning. We may recognise the day with a holiday for everyone or we can celebrate the day as a nation with special events. Most States and Territories observe some of the public holidays on the same date. They have others on different dates or have some days that only their State or Territory celebrates. In larger cities, most shops, restaurants and public transport continue to operate on public holidays. In smaller towns, most shops and restaurants close.

New Year

Australians love to celebrate New Year. There are festivals, celebrations and parties all over the country to welcome in the New Year. Sydney Harbour and Sydney Harbour Bridge have become synonymous with New Year celebrations in Australia the fireworks display is considered to be one of the best in the world. January 1 is a public holiday.

Australia Day

Australia Day, January 26, is the day we as a people and place celebrate our nationhood. The day is a public holiday. The day marks the founding of the first settlement in our nation by European people.

Easter

In addition to its religious significance, Easter in Australia is enjoyed as a four-day holiday weekend starting on Good Friday and ending on Easter Monday. This extra-long weekend is an opportunity for Australians to take a mini-holiday, or get together with family and friends. Easter is the busiest time for domestic air travel in Australia, and a very popular time for gatherings such as weddings and christenings.

- **Hot Cross Buns:** Hot cross buns are sweet, spiced buns made with dried fruit and leavened with yeast. A cross, the symbol of Christ, is placed on top of the buns, either with pastry or a simple mixture of flour and water. The buns are traditionally eaten on Good Friday; however in Australia they are available in bakeries and stores many weeks before Easter.
A recent variation on the traditional fruit bun has become popular in Australia. A chocolate version is made with the same spiced mixture, but cocoa is added to the dough and chocolate chips replace the dried fruit.
- **Easter Eggs:** Eggs, symbolising new life, have long been associated with the Easter festival. Chocolate Easter eggs are a favourite part of Easter in Australia. Some families and community groups organise Easter egg hunts for children in parks and recreational areas. Easter eggs are traditionally eaten on Easter Sunday, however stores start stocking Easter treats well before the Easter holiday period.
- **The Easter Bunny:** Early on Easter Sunday morning, the Easter Bunny 'delivers' chocolate Easter eggs to children in Australia, as he does in many parts of the world.
The rabbit and the hare have long been associated with fertility, and have therefore been associated with spring and spring festivals. The rabbit as a symbol of Easter seems to have originated in Germany where it was first recorded in writings in the 16th century. The first edible Easter bunnies, made from sugared pastry, were made in Germany in the 19th century.

Anzac Day

Anzac Day is on April 25 the day the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed at Gallipoli in Turkey in 1915 during World War 1. This day is set apart to hold dear the memory of those who fought for our nation and those who lost their life to war. The day is a public holiday. We remember with ceremonies, wreath laying and military parades. You will find that many towns have an ANZAC Day parade and ceremony culminating in the laying of memorial wreaths at a monument or war memorial. These services can be very moving and a wonderful way of experiencing some Australian National pride, as the memories of our fallen soldiers are commemorated. Many Australians attend the National War Memorial in Canberra, or a War Memorial in one of the Capital Cities around Australia for either the traditional "Dawn Service", which commemorates the landing of the ANZACS at Gallipoli in the dark and dawning of that day, or another service usually commencing around mid-morning with a parade of returned armed forces representing all Australians who have fought in war. As Australia is such a multi-cultural country, these days it is common to see many other countries also represented in these parades.

ANZAC Day is the only day of the year where it may also be possible to attend an RSL (Returned Servicemen's League) Club to experience a traditional game of "TWO-UP". A game of chance played by the ANZACS where money is wagered on the toss of three coins for a resulting combination of 2 out of 3 being either heads or tails. RSL clubs are crammed with returned soldiers and their families and friends on this day, the atmosphere is one of "mate-ship" and friendliness to all and the experience of a game of two-up is a memorable one.

Labor Day

Labor Day is celebrated on different dates throughout Australia. As elsewhere in the world, Labor Day originated in Australia as a means of giving 'working people' a day off and recognising the roots of trade unionist movements and workers' rights.

Queen's Birthday

The Queen's Birthday holiday celebrates the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II who is not only Queen of the United Kingdom but also Queen of Australia, where the Queen's Birthday is a public holiday celebrated on a Monday but on different dates. Having the Queen's Birthday on a Monday, results in a three-day long weekend.

Christmas

Christmas is celebrated in Australia on 25 December.

The heat of early summer in Australia has an impact on the way that Australians celebrate Christmas and our English heritage also has an impact on some northern hemisphere Christmas traditions which are followed.

In the weeks leading up to Christmas houses are decorated; greetings cards sent out; carols sung; Christmas trees installed in homes, schools and public places; and children delight in anticipating a visit from Santa Claus. On Christmas Day family and friends gather to exchange gifts and enjoy special Christmas food. Australians are as likely to eat freshly caught seafood outdoors at a barbeque, as to have a traditional roast dinner around a dining table.

Many Australians spend Christmas out of doors, going to the beach for the day, or heading to camping grounds for a longer break over the Christmas holiday period. There are often places that have developed an international reputation for overseas visitors to spend Christmas Day in Australia. One such example is for visitors who are in Sydney at Christmas time to go to Bondi Beach where up to 40,000 people visit on Christmas Day.

Carols by Candlelight has become a huge Christmas tradition in Australia. Carols by Candlelight events today range from huge gatherings, which are televised live throughout the country, to smaller local community and church events.

Christmas in Australia is also associated with two major sporting events:

- **The Boxing Day Test:** December 26 is the opening day of the traditional 'Boxing Day Test' at the MCG (Melbourne Cricket Ground) between the Australian Cricket Team and an international touring side. It is the most anticipated cricket match each year in world cricket, and tickets are usually sold out months in advance.
- **The Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race:** the "Sydney-to-Hobart" is Australia's most prestigious yachting race and on the calendar of international yacht racing, and begins 26 December in beautiful Sydney Harbour, finishing in spectacular Hobart.

(Source: Australian Government – Culture and Recreation Portal)

Sources:

ISANA International Education Association Inc (www.isana.org.au)

Department of Economic Development & Tourism – Welcome to Tasmania (www.development.tas.gov.au)

Macquarie University (www.mq.edu.au)

Australian Government – Culture & Recreation Portal (www.australia.gov.au)