

Moving to Australia:

a guide for health professionals

June 2026





This guide was prepared on behalf of the [Health Workforce Taskforce](#) under the auspices of the Health Ministers Meeting. It responds to a recommendation in the final report from the [independent review of Australia's regulatory settings relating to overseas health practitioners](#) to centralise front-end support across jurisdictions for this cohort.



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Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge that we stand on countries which always were and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands. We pay our respect to Elders past and present. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians to the Ancestral Lands and Waterways of this country and recognise and pay respect to the ongoing connections to land, water, community and culture.

We are committed to respectful and collaborative ways of working that ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are meaningfully included.

Yulang Gurray – The Ripple Effect

Artist: Mitchell Groat of Marramarra Design

Artwork story

The artwork tells a story that begins at the centre and flows outward like a ripple effect, symbolising welcome, connection and lasting impact. Each element builds upon the last, reflecting how the Health Workforce Taskforce's work begins with cultural respect and extends to support individuals, systems and communities across the nation. The ripples represent how one respectful action can create widespread, positive change and reach every corner of Australia's health landscape.

In Australia, it is common to begin meetings and events with an Acknowledgement of Country, which recognises the Traditional Owners of the land on which the meeting or event is taking place. Find out more about [Acknowledgement of Country](#).

This guide provides general settlement information and links to relevant resources to help internationally qualified health professionals and their families settle into Australian life.

This information is intended for:

- internationally qualified health professionals across all health professions who wish to learn more about living and working in Australia, or who have decided to move to Australia
- family members of internationally qualified health professionals
- local health employers who are recruiting, or want to recruit, internationally qualified health professionals.

Consultation with the following key stakeholder groups has informed this guide's content:

- representatives from Australian Government and state and territory health departments
- the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra)
- the Business Industry and Regional Outreach division of the Department of Home Affairs
- internationally qualified health professionals across a range of professions who relocated to Australia recently
- Primary Health Networks
- professional associations and councils
- public and private health employers
- Rural Workforce Agencies.

Other complementary resources

For profession-specific information about the end-to-end process of registration, migration, relocation and employment, access:

- [*How to work as a nurse or midwife in Australia: a step-by-step guide*](#)
- [*How to work as a medical practitioner in Australia: a step-by-step guide.*](#)

Similar guides may be created for other health professions in the future.

To orient to the Australian health system and prepare for safe practice, access [*Working in Australia: an orientation to the health system.*](#)

To keep in mind

The information in this guide is current as at June 2026. It is intended to be general information only **and should not be relied on as specific advice** for any individual circumstances. The information may be subject to change, and individuals should always check with the relevant agency for the most up-to-date information and/or seek advice specific to their circumstances before taking relevant action.

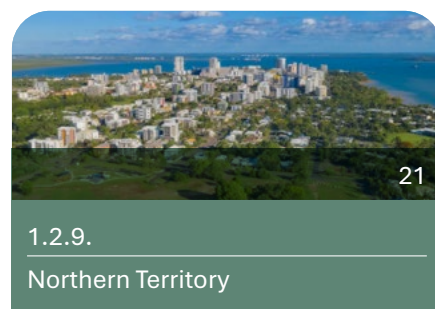
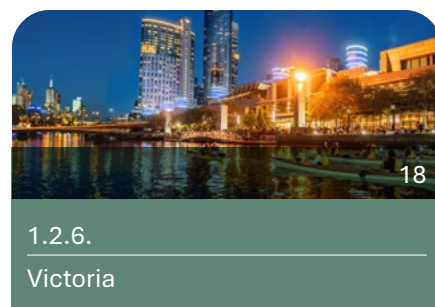
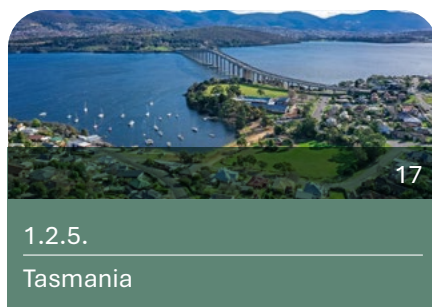
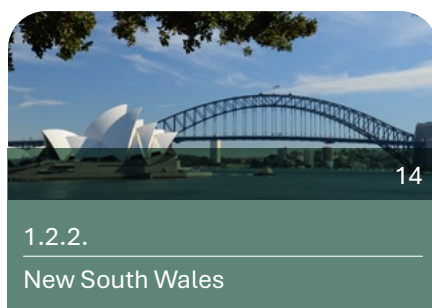
Note:

For the purpose of this guide, any reference to 'Australians' includes all people living in Australia, regardless of their citizenship status.



Contents

1.	About Australia	8
1.1.	Why choose Australia?	10
1.1.1.	High standard of living	10
1.1.2.	Relaxed lifestyle	10
1.1.3.	Safe and diverse communities	11
1.1.4.	A culture based on fairness, equality and camaraderie	11
1.1.5.	Quality health system with leading technology	11
1.2.	Australia's states and territories	12



1.3.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	23
1.3.1.	Colonisation	23
1.3.2.	Federation, assimilation and the Stolen Generations	24
1.3.3.	Reconciliation	24
1.3.4.	Respectful terminology	25
1.3.5.	Cultural safety training for health professionals	25
1.4.	A brief overview of the Australian health system	26
2.	Health professional regulation, migration and employment	27
2.1.	Health professional regulation in Australia	28
2.1.1.	Professions regulated under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme	28
2.1.2.	Health professions not regulated under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme	30
2.2.	Migration and visas	31
2.2.1.	Skills assessment	31
2.2.2.	Independent skilled visas	32
2.2.3.	Employer sponsored skilled visas	32
2.2.4.	Visa conditions and obligations	32
2.3.	Job search and employment	33
2.3.1.	Understand the Australian health system	33
2.3.2.	Where to look for jobs	33
2.3.3.	Pay snapshot	34
2.3.4.	Rural Workforce Agencies Network	34
2.3.5.	Health employer requirements	36
2.3.6.	Health workforce incentives	37
2.3.7.	Partner career opportunities	37
3.	Preparing to move to Australia	38
3.1.	Relocation support	39
3.1.1.	Budgeting for your move	39
3.2.	Accommodation	40
3.3.	Child care and the school system	41
3.3.1.	Early education	41
3.3.2.	School	41
3.4.	Organising health insurance	43
3.4.1.	Private health insurance	43
4.	When you arrive in Australia	44
4.1.	Setting up an Australian phone number	45

4.2.	Medicare	46
4.2.1.	Accessing Australia's public health services as a consumer	46
4.2.2.	Claiming Medicare benefits as a provider	46
4.3.	Personal finance	47
4.3.1.	Setting up an Australian bank account	47
4.3.2.	Tax	47
4.3.3.	Medicare levy	48
4.3.4.	Salary sacrificing	48
4.3.5.	Superannuation	48
4.4.	Employment conditions	49
4.4.1.	National standards, awards and enterprise agreements	49
4.4.2.	Independent contractors	50
4.4.3.	Leave entitlements	50
4.5.	Driving and public transport	51
4.5.1.	Driving in Australia	51
4.5.2.	Public transport	52
4.6.	Australian slang	53
4.7.	Climate, extreme weather events, wildlife and water recreation safety	54
4.7.1.	Climate and extreme weather events	54
4.7.2.	Wildlife	54
4.7.3.	Water recreation safety	55
5.	Living in Australia	56
5.1.	Mental health, wellbeing and support services	57
5.1.1.	Mental health and wellbeing	57
5.1.2.	Other support services	58
5.1.3.	Professional associations and peer support networks	58
5.1.4.	Community and multicultural support	59
5.1.5.	Social security (Centrelink)	59
5.2.	Understanding and protecting your rights	60
5.2.1.	Key Australia-wide agencies	60
5.3.	Long-term settlement and citizenship	61
6.	Appendix	62
6.1.	Glossary of common Australian terms	63
6.1.1.	Government and financial	63
6.1.2.	Health	63
6.1.3.	Media	64
6.2.	Checklist for planning your move	63

1

About Australia

This section will give you an overview of Australia – from its vibrant cities and diverse culture to its world-class healthcare system – to help you decide whether it's the right destination for you.



Here are some facts about Australia.



Australia is home to the oldest continuous living cultures in the world. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have lived on the Australian continent for at least 65,000 years.¹



It is the world's sixth-largest country after Russia, Canada, China, the United States of America and Brazil,² yet it has a relatively small population of approximately 27.5 million people.³ It is the only nation to govern an entire continent.



The National Flag depicts the Union Jack, Southern Cross and Commonwealth Star. It is often flown together with the Aboriginal flag and/or Torres Strait Islander flag.



The golden wattle is the national flower. When in flower, the golden wattle displays the national colours, green and gold.⁴



The red kangaroo and emu are the national animal emblems. They were chosen because they are native to Australia and symbolise a nation that is always moving forward, as these animals are believed to be unable to move backwards.⁵



1 Ramachandran S. et al., 'An Aboriginal Australian Genome Reveals Separate Human Dispersals into Asia', *Science*, 2011. 334(6052):94–98.

2 Geoscience Australia, *Australia's size compared*, 2025.

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National, state and territory population*, March 2025.

4 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Australian floral emblem*, n.d.

5 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Commonwealth Coat of Arms*, n.d.

1.1. Why choose Australia?

If you are a healthcare professional looking to take your career to the next level, Australia offers you the opportunity to work within a world-class health system while enjoying a high standard of living, stunning landscapes and a welcoming, multicultural society.

1.1.1. High standard of living

Australia consistently ranks among the world's most desirable places to live, performing well across key measures such as income, employment, education, healthcare and overall wellbeing.⁶ Our clean natural environments, safe communities, strong social connections and stable democratic system contribute to a high standard of living for many residents. Whether you are building a career, raising a family or seeking new experiences, Australia can offer a fulfilling lifestyle.

1.1.2. Relaxed lifestyle

Australians value balance, connection and wellbeing at work and in day-to-day life. Beyond the workplace, we enjoy a vibrant mix of outdoor activities, sports and world-class food and wine, and deeply appreciate the natural environment. Whether enjoying a beach picnic, attending a local festival, or cheering at a sports match with families and friends, living in Australia means embracing a laid-back lifestyle and making the most of the natural environment.



⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Better Life Index*, n.d.



Lakshminarayanan Occupational Therapist Practising in VIC

I earned my primary health qualification in India and chose to move to Australia because I wanted to work in a healthcare system that values innovation, diversity and patient-centred care. The decision wasn't just about career – it was about creating a better life for my family, who moved with me and have embraced this new chapter wholeheartedly.

Living and working in Melbourne has been transformative. I love the balance between professional growth and lifestyle – the vibrant culture, beautiful parks, and the sense of safety and inclusion. In my role, I've found colleagues who are supportive and collaborative, which makes every challenge feel achievable.

To anyone considering this move: take the leap. Start your registration early, connect with professional networks, and be open to learning. Australia offers not just a job but a community and a quality of life that can truly enrich your personal and professional journey.

1.1.3. Safe and diverse communities

Australia is generally regarded as a safe and welcoming country to live and work in. We have a stable democratic system and strong law enforcement, including strict gun laws.⁷ Australians are encouraged to respect all people's rights, beliefs and freedoms, regardless of background, political views, sexuality or religion. Our health system, in particular, values people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, LGBTIQ+SB community members, and people living with disability. Inclusive organisational policies for workplaces, schools and universities, along with support from local diversity networks, are available to meet the needs of all Australians.

1.1.4. A culture based on fairness, equality and camaraderie

We value freedom, respect, fairness and equal opportunity. Camaraderie is at the heart of our culture, and friendliness and inclusion are ingrained in everyday life. In Australia, everyone:

- has the right to live safely and with dignity
- is entitled to freedom of speech, religion and beliefs
- has equal opportunities, regardless of gender, age, race, disability status or background
- is subject to the rules of the law equally.⁸

1.1.5. Quality health system with leading technology

Australia offers many and varied opportunities to expand your skills and advance your career, no matter where you are based. Working in regional, rural or remote areas exposes you to a wide variety of cases, allowing you to accelerate your practical experience and clinical skills. Across the country, you will find modern facilities equipped with industry-leading technology and practices that support high-quality patient care. Whether you are thinking of coming to Australia for a short period or hope to stay long term, Australia is an ideal place to gain a range of experiences and advance your career in healthcare.

⁷ Department of Home Affairs: Smart Move Australia, *Safe and secure*, 2025.

⁸ Department of Home Affairs, *Australian values*, 2024.



1.2. Australia's states and territories

Australia, officially the Commonwealth of Australia, is located in the southern hemisphere. It is a country, island, and continent bounded by the Indian Ocean to the west and the Pacific Ocean to the east.



Here are some interesting facts about Australia's size.



Around 87% of Australia's population lives within 50 kilometres of the coast.⁹



Due to the country's size, air travel is frequently used to move within and between states and territories. To put it into perspective, driving from Sydney to Perth would take nearly two days non-stop, and driving from the northern tip of Queensland to its southern border would take more than 35 hours. This is why domestic flights are a popular and time-effective option for longer journeys.



Australia has 3 main time zones: Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST), Australian Central Standard Time (ACST) and Australian Western Standard Time (AWST). Some states and territories also observe Daylight Saving Time (DST) in summer.¹⁰

⁹ Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, *State of the Environment Report*, 2021.

¹⁰ Australia, *Australian time zones*, 2025.

1.2.1. Australia's system of government



Australia is a representative democracy with a system of government based on the British Westminster system. The prime minister is the head of the Australian Government.

Canberra, in the Australian Capital Territory, is the capital of Australia and home to the national parliament.

Australia has a federation of states, with national decision-making powers resting with the Australian Government.

- **The Australian Government** (sometimes referred to as the federal government) is responsible for issues that affect all Australians, including foreign policy, international and Australian trade and commerce, defence, immigration, Medicare, banking and insurance, pensions, taxation, welfare payments, currency, and postal and telecommunications services.
- **State and territory governments** are responsible for public transport, public hospitals, policing, schools, roads and prisons. Australia has 6 states – New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia – and 2 main territories – the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.
- **Local governments**, also known as ‘councils’, ‘municipalities’ or ‘shires’, are responsible for waste management, including rubbish collection, local roads, footpaths, parks, sports facilities, swimming pools, town planning, local libraries, parking, building approvals, sewerage and pet control.



1.2.2. New South Wales



New South Wales is Australia's most populous state, with nearly one-third of Australians living there.¹¹ It is home to iconic Australian landmarks such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Sydney Opera House and Bondi Beach. The state has a variety of regions, including a long coastline, mountain ranges and expansive agricultural plains.

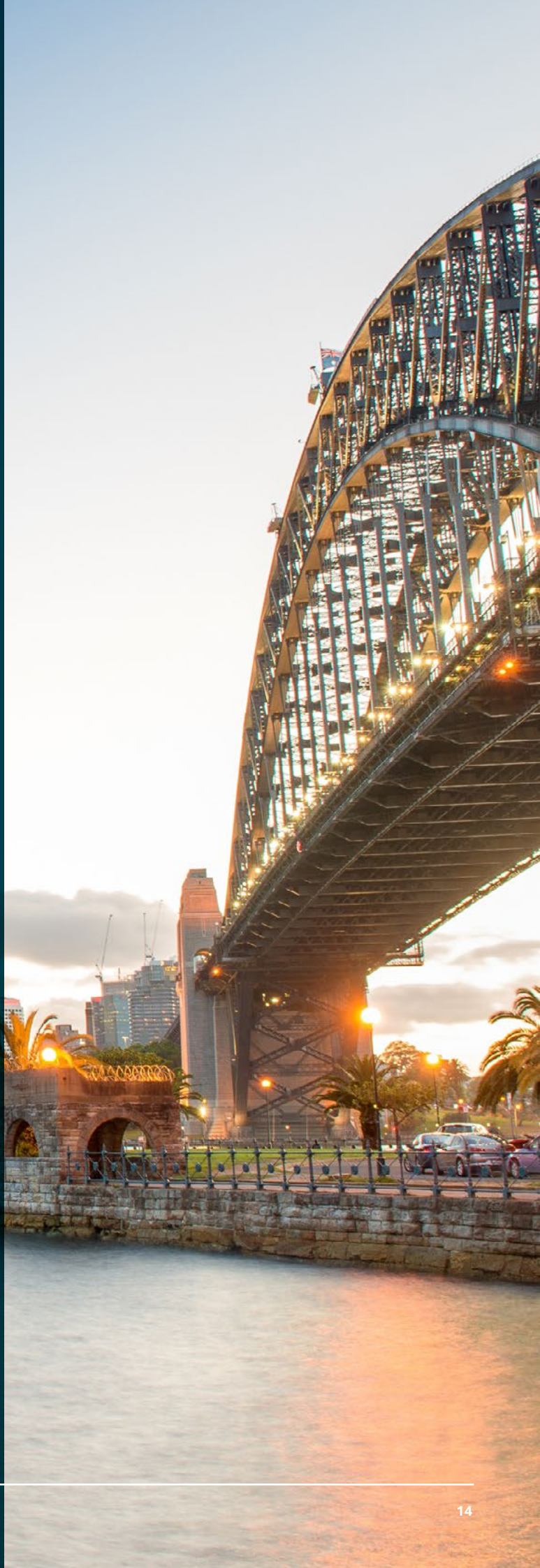
Population: 8.6 million²

Land size: 801,150 square kilometres¹²

Major cities: Sydney, Wollongong, Newcastle

Number of registered health practitioners as at 30 June 2025: 256,959¹³

Snapshot of public health facilities:
226 public hospitals across 15 local health districts
and 2 specialty networks¹⁴



² Geoscience Australia, *Australia's size compared*, 2025.

¹¹ NSW Health, *Key Facts about NSW*, n.d.

¹² Geoscience Australia, *Area of Australia – States and Territories*, 2014.

¹³ Ahpra & National Boards, *Annual Report 2024/2025*, 2025.

¹⁴ NSW Health, *Annual Report 2023-2024*, 2024.

1.2.3. Queensland



Queensland is the second-largest state in Australia and is known as the ‘Sunshine State’ because most of the state receives an average of 8 to 9 hours of sunshine every day. It is home to multiple World Natural Heritage areas, including the Great Barrier Reef, K’gari (formerly known as ‘Fraser Island’), the Daintree Rainforest and more.¹⁵ Brisbane, the largest city in Queensland, is the state’s capital.

Population: 5.6 million²

Land size: 1,729,742 square kilometres¹²

Major cities: Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Townsville, Cairns and Toowoomba

Number of registered health practitioners as at 30 June 2025: 194,852¹³

Snapshot of public health facilities:
106 public hospitals across 16 Hospital and Health Services (HHS)¹⁶

² Geoscience Australia, *Australia’s size compared*, 2025.

¹² Geoscience Australia, *Area of Australia – States and Territories*, 2014.

¹³ Ahpra & National Boards, *Annual Report 2024/2025*, 2025.

¹⁵ Queensland Government, *Interesting facts about Queensland*, December 2017.

¹⁶ Queensland Health, *Statewide performance*, December 2024.



1.2.4. South Australia



South Australia is known as the ‘Festival State’ due to its numerous arts and gastronomic festivals held throughout the year, particularly in its capital city, Adelaide. This reflects the state’s vibrant cultural scene and commitment to celebrating diverse artistic expressions. Outside Adelaide, South Australia is home to many unique regional communities. The state boasts world-renowned wine regions, such as the Barossa Valley, pristine coastal towns and accessible outback adventures in the Flinders Ranges. Beyond the natural environment, South Australia offers easy statewide accessibility and fresh local produce.

Population: 1.9 million²

Land size: 984,321 square kilometres¹²

Major cities: Adelaide, Mount Gambier, Whyalla

Number of registered health practitioners as at 30 June 2025: 70,185¹³

Snapshot of public health facilities:

Statewide services aligned to 10 local health networks, providing a range of public hospital and other community-based health services.¹⁷



² Geoscience Australia, *Australia's size compared*, 2025.

¹² Geoscience Australia, *Area of Australia – States and Territories*, 2014.

¹³ Ahpra & National Boards, *Annual Report 2024/2025*, 2025.

¹⁷ Government of South Australia, *Our Local Health Networks*, June 2025.

1.2.5. Tasmania



Tasmania is an island state with a temperate, maritime climate. It is known for its unique wildlife, clean air, pure water, beautiful native forests, fresh produce, and arts and culture. Hobart, the state's capital, is a vibrant and culturally rich hub nestled between the waters of the Derwent River and the peaks of Mount Wellington.

Population: 576,100²

Land size: 68,401 square kilometres¹²

Major cities: Hobart, Launceston

Number of registered health practitioners as at 30 June 2025: 20,731¹³

Snapshot of public health facilities:
4 major hospitals, 8 district hospitals¹⁸

² Geoscience Australia, *Australia's size compared*, 2025.

¹² Geoscience Australia, *Area of Australia – States and Territories*, 2014.

¹³ Ahpra & National Boards, *Annual Report 2024/2025*, 2025.

¹⁸ Tasmania Health, *Hospitals*, September 2024.



1.2.6. Victoria



Victoria is a cultural capital, known as the 'Education State' for its excellent schools and universities, and the 'Garden State' for its beautiful parks and gardens. Its capital, Melbourne, is known for its vibrant art scene, live music, thriving café and food scene, and big sporting events like the Australian Open tennis tournament and Formula 1 car racing. Beyond the city, Victoria has something for everyone, with alpine areas and ski fields, surf beaches, lush forests, wine regions and iconic natural landmarks.¹⁹

Population: 7.1 million²

Land size: 227,444 square kilometres¹²

Major cities: Melbourne, Geelong

Number of registered health practitioners as at 30 June 2025: 247,545¹³

Snapshot of public health facilities:

Over 300 hospitals and health services, including large public and private hospitals, rural and regional health services, and specialist hospitals²⁰



² Geoscience Australia, *Australia's size compared*, 2025.

¹² Geoscience Australia, *Area of Australia – States and Territories*, 2014.

¹³ Ahpra & National Boards, *Annual Report 2024/2025*, 2025.

¹⁹ Victoria Department of Health, *Living in Victoria*, July 2023.

²⁰ Department of Health Victoria, *Public Hospitals in Victoria*, July 2025.

1.2.7. Western Australia



Western Australia is the largest state in Australia and one of the largest in the world, roughly equivalent in size to Western Europe. Perth, the capital city, is known as Australia's sunniest capital, with over 3,000 hours of sunshine each year and 80% of the population residing there. Given its size, Western Australia has a diverse climate and geography, with Mediterranean conditions in the south, tropical conditions in the north, beautiful white sand beaches, reef formations, expansive outback, renowned wine regions and more.²¹

Population: 3 million²

Land size: 2,527,013 square kilometres¹²

Major cities: Perth

Large regional centres: Albany, Broome, Bunbury, Geraldton, Karratha, Kalgoorlie and Port Hedland

Number of registered health practitioners as at 30 June 2025: 97,771¹³

Snapshot of public health facilities:

More than 80 hospitals across 7 metropolitan Health Service Providers (HSPs) and 7 country regions (Western Australian Country Health Service (WACHS))²²

2 Geoscience Australia, *Australia's size compared*, 2025.

12 Geoscience Australia, *Area of Australia – States and Territories*, 2014.

13 Ahpra & National Boards, *Annual Report 2024/2025*, 2025.

21 Tourism Western Australia, *About Western Australia*, 2025.

22 Government of Western Australia Department of Health, *Our hospitals*, n.d.



1.2.8. Australian Capital Territory



The Australian Capital Territory is home to Australia's capital city, Canberra, and is located centrally between Sydney and Melbourne. It is known for its national institutions, such as Parliament House, the National Gallery of Australia and the Australian War Memorial. It also has many beautiful parks and reserves, which cover approximately 60% of the territory.²³

Population: 483,800²

Land size: 2,358 square kilometres¹²

Major cities: Canberra

Number of registered health practitioners as at 30 June 2025: 17,002¹³

Snapshot of public health facilities:

3 hospitals, 5 walk-in centres and 7 community health centres²⁴

2 Geoscience Australia, *Australia's size compared*, 2025.

12 Geoscience Australia, *Area of Australia – States and Territories*, 2014.

13 Ahpra & National Boards, *Annual Report 2024/2025*, 2025.

23 ACT Government, *ACT parks and reserves*, n.d.

24 ACT Government, *Our hospitals and health services*, 2025.

1.2.9. Northern Territory



The Northern Territory is a vast territory known for its red-earthed ‘outback’ (remote country areas), clear waterholes, ancient Aboriginal cultures and tropical towns. It is home to Uluru, which is considered the spiritual heart of Australia. The territory is also known for its relaxed atmosphere.

Population: 263,400²

Land size: 1,347,791 square kilometres¹²

Major cities: Darwin, Alice Springs

Number of registered health practitioners as at 30 June 2025: 8,974¹³

² Geoscience Australia, *Australia's size compared*, 2025.

¹² Geoscience Australia, *Area of Australia – States and Territories*, 2014.

¹³ Ahpra & National Boards, *Annual Report 2024/2025*, 2025.

1.2.10. Living and working outside metropolitan areas

When deciding where to live, it is important to compare the average living costs in different locations. The cost of housing, rent, utilities, groceries, transport and other living expenses varies between states and territories, and further between metropolitan and regional areas.

See [Expatistan](#) and [Finder](#) for helpful information about the cost of living in Australia.

For migration purposes, most locations outside Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane are classified as [designated regional areas](#). These areas include some of Australia's capital cities, such as Perth, Adelaide, Darwin, Canberra and Hobart, as well as regional metropolitan areas like the Gold Coast, Geelong and Newcastle.²⁵

Australia's regional and rural areas offer a unique opportunity to build your career and make a difference in diverse communities. You will encounter modern infrastructure and technology, hybrid models of care and a wide variety of clinical cases, providing broad clinical exposure and the chance to develop your skills across multiple areas of practice. There are also multiple opportunities for professional growth, career progression, access to leadership roles and ongoing education and

training. Cities in regional areas have world-class public and private hospitals, while country towns usually have a base hospital supported by smaller hospitals, general practices (GPs) and community health clinics in surrounding towns. The [Royal Flying Doctor Service](#) serves remote Australian communities.

Regional and rural areas have many of the same amenities and services as larger cities. These include high-quality schools; arts and culture facilities; local services such as hairdressers, coffee shops and post offices; and strong community networks. Australia's National Broadband Network (NBN) covers most of the country, enabling regional and remote areas to access internet services via fixed wireless or satellite technologies.

Some of Australia's most beautiful natural landscapes are located near regional towns and cities. If you enjoy the outdoors, you will find plenty of national parks, gardens, walking trails and camping areas to explore. Coastal towns offer great opportunities for water activities like fishing, surfing and paddle boarding, while alpine regions in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria are popular for hiking and mountain biking in the warmer months and snow sports during winter.



25 Department of Home Affairs, [Designated regional areas](#), 2025.

1.3. Australia's First Peoples

Before 1788, the continent now known as Australia was home to hundreds of distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations, each with its own languages, laws, governance systems and cultural practices. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised as the world's oldest continuous living cultures, having lived on the continent for at least 65,000 years.

These peoples have deep spiritual and cultural connections to Country (the land), which are expressed through stories, art and ceremonies.²⁶ Visit the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) and the [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies](#) for more information about the First Peoples of Australia.

'Country', which is the term often used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to describe the lands, waterways, seas and skies to which they are connected, is central to their worldviews, identities and wellbeing. It encompasses all living things and all aspects of the environment, as well as the associated knowledge, and cultural practices and responsibilities. Country contains complex ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual beliefs and more.^{27,28}

There are hundreds of distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations across Australia. View the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies [Map of Indigenous Australia](#) as a starting point to learn about the diversity of Australia's First Peoples.

This section provides a brief overview and does not capture the full diversity and complexity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

1.3.1. Colonisation

In 1770, British explorer Lieutenant James Cook landed on the eastern coast of the continent.²⁹ British authorities declared the continent *terra nullius*, a Latin term meaning 'land belonging to no one'. This declaration ignored the existing presence and sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Colonisation began in 1788, when the 'First Fleet' arrived at Sydney Cove and established a convict settlement. Colonisation brought devastating consequences to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including dispossession of land, disruption of cultural practices, violent conflict, the introduction of fatal diseases which they had no natural resistance to, and loss of life.³⁰

The impacts of these events remain present in the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today through social structures, laws, institutions and systems that were created without consideration of their cultural practices and knowledge.



26 Australian Human Rights Commission, *Bringing them home: Historical context – Ancient history*, n.d.

27 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *Welcome to Country*, 2025.

28 Australia State of the Environment, *Country and connections*, 2021.

29 National Museum Australia, *Defining moments: Cook claims Australia*, November 2022.

30 Aboriginal Heritage Office, *A Brief Aboriginal History*, n.d.

1.3.2. Federation, assimilation and the Stolen Generations

Australia became an independent nation in 1901 when the Australian colonies formed the Commonwealth of Australia. At this time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were excluded from almost all aspects of society and denied the right to make decisions about their own lives. For example, they were excluded from the national population count, denied the right to vote and subject to laws and policies that controlled where they could live, work and travel.³¹

The assimilation policy was introduced in the 1930s with the goal of making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples live like non-Indigenous Australians. As a result of this policy, between one in 3 and one in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were forcibly removed from their families and communities between approximately 1910 and 1970.³² They are often referred to as the 'Stolen Generations'. Children were placed in institutions, missions, or the homes of non-Indigenous families, often experiencing neglect, abuse and loss of connection to their culture, community and family. Across Australia, a third of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are descended from Stolen Generations survivors.³³

Stolen Generations survivors have experienced significant grief and trauma as have the families and communities from which they were removed.³⁴ This resulted in fear that is still felt today, reflected through ongoing trauma passed down through generations, ongoing disadvantage, and poorer physical and mental health compared to non-Indigenous Australians.^{35,36,37} Many people alive today have directly experienced the impacts of restrictive policies, forced removals, discrimination and exclusion.

1.3.3. Reconciliation

Reconciliation began through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led efforts to fight for their rights, and became a national movement from the 1960s to strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. Some key events include :

- **1967 Referendum:** 90.77% of Australians voted to change the Constitution so that like all other Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples would be counted as part of the population and the Commonwealth government would be able to make laws for them.
- **1992 Mabo decision:** a group of Torres Strait Islander people, including the lead plaintiff Eddie Mabo, brought an action to Australia's High Court that successfully overturned *terra nullius*. This affirmed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' enduring connection to land, identity.
- **2008 National Apology:** the prime minister of Australia made a formal apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on behalf of the nation, particularly to the Stolen Generations whose lives were impacted by forced child removal and assimilation. The Apology is remembered every year on National Sorry Day.
- **2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart:** leaders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples came together and wrote and endorsed a statement that called for substantial reform, including an advisory body to the Australian parliament, a treaty process, and a truth-telling process that enables shared understanding of Australia's colonial history and contemporary impacts.

31 National Museum Australia, *Defining moments: Indigenous referendum*, 2025.

32 Australian Human Rights Commission, *Bringing them home: Part 2 Tracing the History* n.d

33 Healing Foundation, *Intergenerational trauma*, 2026.

34 Healing Foundation, *Intergenerational trauma*, 2026.

35 The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, *The Stolen Generations*, 2025.

36 Australian Museum, *The Stolen Generation*, 2020.

37 Australian Human Rights Commission, *Bringing them Home – Chapter 2*, n.d.

In 2008, all levels of government in Australia committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to implement the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#). This agreement includes priority reforms and socio-economic targets to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across health and wellbeing, education, employment, housing, justice, safety and cultural connection. While there has been some meaningful progress towards Closing the Gap targets, significant disparities remain.³⁸

In the health sector, there is a specific focus on improving patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This includes the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency's (Ahpra's) [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy](#) and the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and cultural safety in the shared [Code of conduct](#).

1.3.4. Respectful terminology

The terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples', 'First Nations peoples', and 'Indigenous Australians' may be used in different contexts in Australia. Many prefer the term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as it recognises the diversity of communities and cultures. Find out more about [respectful and inclusive language and terminology](#).

1.3.5 Cultural safety training for health professionals

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to experience racism, discrimination and power imbalances in daily life. Many people alive today have directly experienced the impacts of restrictive policies, forced removals, discrimination and exclusion.

It is therefore critical for health professionals working in Australia to undertake training on cultural safety as part of their employment and continue to develop knowledge and skills for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This helps ensure healthcare environments and interactions that are respectful, inclusive and free from racism and discrimination, and improve health outcomes for all.

As a starting point to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and systems, the history of colonisation and its ongoing impacts, health disparities and cultural safety in the Australian health context, see [Working in Australia: an orientation to the health system](#). Health professionals are also encouraged to complete cultural safety training in their local context when they start working.



³⁸ Closing the Gap, [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#), n.d.

1.4. A brief overview of the Australian health system

Australia has a strong public health system that gives everyone access to affordable, high-quality care, no matter where they live.

Our system is built on the principle of universal healthcare, meaning all Australians can access essential health services, including physical and mental healthcare, regardless of income or location. [Medicare](#) is Australia's universal health insurance scheme, providing access to health services at low or no cost. In addition to Medicare, Australians can also choose private health insurance to cover services Medicare does not cover or fully pay for.

The Australian, state and territory governments fund the majority of health services, with private individuals, health insurance providers and other non-government sources funding the remainder.³⁹



In Australia, there are various health and human services you can work in or access as a consumer. These include:

- primary care, including general practices, pharmacies, community health services and more
- specialist care, including emergency medicine, physician care, surgery, mental health services, pathology, imaging and more⁴⁰
- aged care, including residential and home care services
- disability care delivered through the [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\)](#) and other government services, including in-home support, supported independent living and specialist disability accommodation.⁴¹

These services are delivered in a wide range of settings, including public hospitals, public outpatient clinics, private hospitals and private clinics. Some can also be delivered via telehealth consultations. Services are available across metropolitan, rural and remote areas, with growing investment in regional infrastructure and workforce support. Visit the [Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#) for more information.

Australia consistently ranks among the top countries in the world for health outcomes and equitable access to care.⁴² This includes people living in rural and regional communities, who benefit not only from the above health services but also from dedicated services such as:

- regional cancer centres
- telehealth services that connect patients with specialists remotely
- clinical trial centres
- health workforce programs that support local recruitment and training.⁴³

Find out more about the Australian health system in *Working in Australia: an orientation to the health system*.

39 Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, [The Australian health system](#), April 2025.

40 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [Health system overview](#), July 2024.

41 National Disability Insurance Scheme, [Housing and living supports and services](#), January 2023.

42 The Commonwealth Fund, [MIRROR, MIRROR 2024 A Portrait of the Failing U.S. Health System: Comparing Performance in 10 Nations](#), 2024.

43 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, [Australia in Brief](#), 2021.

2

Health professional regulation, migration and employment

This section will take you through the key considerations for health professional regulation, migration and employment. It will help you understand the context and what to expect.



2.1. Health professional regulation in Australia

In Australia, all health professionals must meet certain standards to make sure healthcare is safe, high-quality and ethical. Some professions are regulated under a national system called the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS). Others are regulated in different ways. Public health and safety is the most important factor in regulation.

2.1.1. Professions regulated under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

The NRAS is Australia's national system for regulating health practitioners.⁴⁴ All health practitioners registered under this scheme must meet consistent national professional standards, regardless of the state or territory in which they practise. This also allows them to practise across state and territory borders without having to re-register in each jurisdiction.

The NRAS regulates 16 health professions, including medical, dental, nursing, midwifery and a range of allied health professions. A list of registered professions and the titles they are entitled to use can be found on the [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency \(Ahpra\)](#) website at [Who needs to register?](#) If you wish to work in one of these professions in Australia, you **must** be registered with the relevant National Board before starting work.

These professions are overseen by 15 National Boards. Ahpra works with National Boards to ensure that Australia's registered health practitioners are suitably trained, qualified and safe to practise. Each National Board is responsible for setting national registration requirements and standards for the profession. Ahpra supports the 15 National Boards to regulate the registered health professions. Its [core functions](#) include managing registration and renewal processes for health practitioners, maintaining a public register of registered practitioners, monitoring health practitioners and students to ensure compliance with Board requirements, managing complaints and concerns raised about health practitioners in most states and territories, and more.



⁴⁴ Health professionals registered under the NRAS are referred to as 'health practitioners'.

Registration pathways

In Australia, there are different pathways for internationally qualified health practitioners to register and practise. Each of the 16 registered professions has its own registration pathways. Each pathway has eligibility requirements and involves qualification assessment. Your registration pathway will depend on your qualifications, the type of registration you are seeking and, in some cases, whether you are intending to work in Australia temporarily or long term.

For example, there are expedited pathways for [specialist international medical graduates \(SIMGs\)](#), a streamlined registration standard for internationally qualified [registered nurses](#) and streamlined pathways for internationally qualified occupational therapists. These pathways are for eligible internationally qualified health practitioners who have approved qualifications and/or have registered and practised in their profession in a Board-approved comparable jurisdiction.

Check with the relevant National Board to see which pathway you are eligible for.

Applying for registration under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

Registration can take time. Ahpra regularly updates its application assessment timeframes on its [international health practitioner page](#). If your application is incomplete or incorrect, it may be delayed, so it is important to carefully follow the requirements set by Ahpra and the National Board to which you are applying.

When applying for registration, you will be asked for documents that prove your identity, qualifications, work history, registration history in other jurisdictions and English language competency. These documents must be certified and translated into English in a format that meets Ahpra's requirements. You may also need to provide information for criminal history checks. To help you prepare your application documents, see Ahpra's [checklist](#) and the relevant National Board's requirements.

Some professions' registration pathways may involve exams and/or assessments. Check with the relevant National Board to see which pathway you are eligible for and what steps are involved in the registration process.



Common challenges international applicants may experience during the registration process include:

- delays caused by incomplete or incorrect applications, due to missing documents or incorrectly certified or translated documents
- underestimating the time required for the academic institution and local registration authority to submit documents to the National Board
- challenges in scheduling and passing the necessary exams and assessments for registration
- underestimating the time it takes to be granted registration, which can delay employment start dates.

2.1.2. Health professions not regulated under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

Not all health professions in Australia are regulated under the NRAS. Some are regulated through other means, such as code regulation and self-regulation. These professions include, but are not limited to:

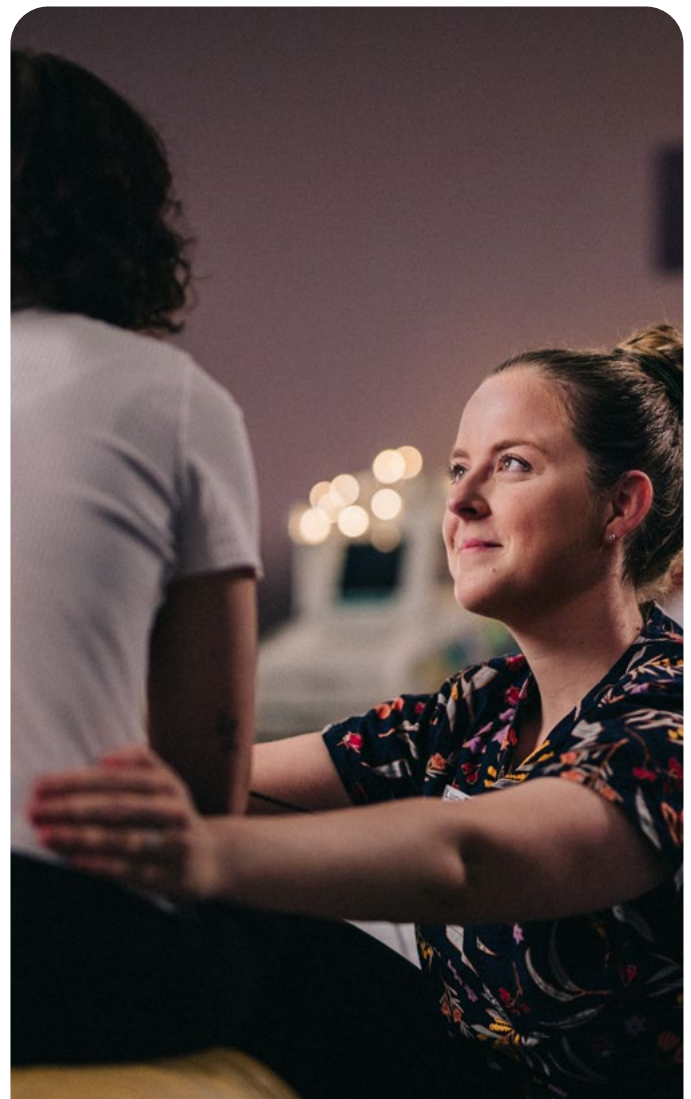
- art therapy
- audiology
- dietetics
- exercise physiology
- genetic counselling
- music therapy
- psychotherapy
- orthotics and prosthetics
- social work
- sonography
- speech pathology.

Under code regulation, health professionals who are not included in NRAS must comply with codes of conduct or other requirements that apply in the states and territories where they work. There are no entry barriers to practising a profession, but individual health professionals may be prohibited from practising if they are found to be in breach of the code of conduct.

Under self-regulation, professional associations for individual professions set their own standards, codes and guidelines that members must comply with. Membership is voluntary, meaning the individual can choose whether to join. The Department of Home Affairs often recognises professional associations as the authorities responsible for conducting skills assessments for visa purposes.

Many professional bodies for self-regulated health professions are members of the [National Alliance of Self-Regulating Health Professions](#). Find the association for your profession and follow its instructions on how to get your qualifications recognised.

Find out more about health professional regulation in *Working in Australia: an orientation to the health system*.



2.2. Migration and visas

In Australia, The Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) is responsible for immigration and visas.

You will need a visa to live and work in Australia. Table 1 shows the different visa options.

Table 1: Visa options

Temporary visas	Permanent visas
• Work and skilled visas (independent; employer sponsored) • Family and partner visas • Visitor visas (e.g. working holiday) • Study and training visas	• Work and skilled visas (independent; employer sponsored) • Family and partner visas

There are many visa types in each category, so it is important to understand the requirements for each visa type and choose the one that best suits your situation. If you are interested in staying in Australia long term, consider visa types with pathways to permanent residency. Use the Home Affairs [visa finder](#) to explore visa options.

Make sure you plan for extended lead times for visa approvals. Visa processing times vary depending on the type of visa, with some taking 12 to 18 months (and sometimes longer) to process. Find out more about [visa processing times](#).

2.2.1. Skills assessment

For some work or skilled visa types, you may need to undergo a skills assessment with the assessing authority for your occupation to demonstrate that your skills meet the standards for migration to Australia. Home Affairs will only accept a skills assessment issued by the relevant assessing authority for your nominated occupation on its [list of assessing authorities](#).

Australia and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) is a classification system used to categorise all occupations and jobs in Australia and New Zealand.⁴⁵ Each occupation is tied to a numerical code and contains information on the skill level, qualifications and experience required. If you are applying for a skilled visa, you may need to nominate a ANZSCO code for your skills assessment and visa application.

For some National Regulation and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) regulated professions – such as medical and podiatry – Home Affairs may accept your professional registration as meeting the skills assessment requirement for your visa application. For other professions such as nursing and midwifery, psychology and occupational therapy, an independent authority, separate from the registration body, conducts the skills assessment. As information is not shared between the registration and skills assessment bodies, you will need to provide similar information to both entities. These two application processes are entirely separate, and success in one does not automatically guarantee success in the other. For professions that are not regulated under NRAS, such as speech pathology and social work, the professional association for that profession typically conducts the skills assessment.

⁴⁵ The Australian Bureau of Statistics has introduced a new classification system, Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA). As of April 2026, Home Affairs continues to use ANZSCO codes for visa and migration purposes. A transition to OSCA may occur in the future.

2.2.2. Independent skilled visas

For certain independent (non-employer sponsored) skilled visa types, you must be invited to apply, and your occupation must be on the [skilled occupation list](#) for that visa. To get started, you must first submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) through [SkillSelect](#). You will need to have your skills assessment (or registration, if acceptable in lieu of the skills assessment) to submit your EOI. There is no fee for this process. The EOI will be assessed using a points system, and is based on whether there are places allocated for your occupation. You must meet a minimum points threshold to be considered, but receiving an invitation to apply often requires a higher score, depending on demand and competition for that invitation round. You can use the [points calculator](#) to estimate your score based on factors such as age, work experience, education and English proficiency. Once submitted, you must wait for an invitation to apply. Your EOI remains valid for up to 2 years. If you do not receive an invitation during this period, your EOI will expire and you will need to lodge a new one.

The Home Affairs website has more information about the [latest invitation rounds](#). For more information about specific point allocations for visa subclasses, search for the points table for the visa you would like to apply for.

You may be eligible to seek the support of a state or territory government for your skilled visa application. Each state or territory government has its own criteria to select the applicants they nominate for a skilled visa. Refer to the relevant state or territory government's website for further information.

Working in regional areas

Additional visa options are available if you plan to live and work in regional areas of Australia, some of which provide pathways to permanent residency and bonus points towards the points test for skilled migration visas. Find out more about [regional visa options](#).

2.2.3. Employer sponsored skilled visas

For temporary employer sponsored skilled visas, you generally need to be nominated by an employer who is applying to be, or already is, an approved sponsor. Additionally, your occupation must be on the [skilled occupation list](#), unless you will be earning over a specified threshold. Temporary employer sponsored visas often have pathways to permanent residency. Your employer must pay certain costs associated with the application, and you may be asked to pay or contribute to visa application costs for yourself and any family members moving with you.

For permanent employer sponsored visas, you also need to be nominated by an employer. Most employees apply under 2 main streams:

- the Temporary Residence Transition stream, where an employee is typically eligible after working in Australia for 2 years on a temporary employer sponsored visa; or
- the Direct Entry stream, where an employee can apply with a skills assessment and at least 3 years of full-time work experience in their occupation. This experience can consist of time worked in Australia and abroad.

For both streams, the age limit is generally 45; however, some exemptions and/or concessions may apply. Other eligibility criteria, such as English proficiency, health status and character requirements, also apply. Find out more about the [Employer Nomination Scheme](#).

2.2.4. Visa conditions and obligations

If your visa is granted, it will include rules about what you can and can't do in Australia. Some temporary visas, such as those sponsored by an employer, may include restrictions on the position you can work in or the employer you can work for. Be aware of your visa conditions and obligations and follow them. Find out more about [checking visa details and conditions](#) and [reporting changes in your situation](#).

Who can help you with your application?

You may wish to consider appointing someone to help you with your visa application. Only registered migration agents, legal practitioners or [exempt people](#) can provide immigration assistance for visas in Australia. Find out more about [using a registered migration agent](#).

2.3. Job search and employment

Finding the right role in Australia involves understanding the local job market, knowing where to look for jobs, navigating employer requirements and understanding what support is available from employers and external organisations.

2.3.1. Understand the Australian health system

There are many employment opportunities across the Australian health system. Each state and territory manages its own public health system and recruits its own workforce. Private settings, including private hospitals, private practices (e.g., general practices, dental practices and allied health practices) as well as pharmacies also recruit staff independently. There is consistent demand for health professionals in both metropolitan and regional areas, with regional settings often offering more job opportunities and faster pathways to employment.



2.3.2. Where to look for jobs

Jobs in Australia are advertised across a range of platforms. General job boards for all industries and professions include:

- [Seek](#)
- [Indeed Australia](#)
- [LinkedIn](#).

Many health organisations have their own job boards, including but not limited to:

- state and territory health departments:
 - [ACT Health](#)
 - [NSW Health](#)
 - [Health Jobs NT](#)
 - [Qld Health](#)
 - [SA Health](#)
 - [Tas Health](#)
 - [Vic Health](#)
 - [WA Health](#)
- [Primary Health Networks](#) for jobs in primary care
- state and territory pathology providers
- private health providers:
 - [Epworth HealthCare](#)
 - [Ramsay Health Care](#)
 - [St John of God Health Care](#)
 - [St Vincent's Health Australia](#).

2.3.3. Pay snapshot

If you are interested in working in the public health system, you can explore pay rates for your profession by reviewing the relevant state or territory award or enterprise agreement. These documents are available online. Search for '[state/territory] [profession] salary' and refer to the relevant state or territory government website for the most accurate information.

If you are interested in working in the private health system, your remuneration will be based on minimum entitlements, but you may have more flexibility to negotiate your pay and conditions directly with your employer. See [4.4 Employment conditions](#) for more information.

2.3.4. Rural Workforce Agencies Network

The Rural Workforce Agencies Network comprises Rural Workforce Agencies in every Australian state and the Northern Territory.

These organisations attract, recruit and support health professionals needed in rural and remote communities. These organisations typically provide free assistance, advice and information on career pathways to health professionals interested in working in the primary and community health sectors in outer metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations. They can help secure employment, access relocation grants, provide settlement information and facilitate ongoing training opportunities.⁴⁶

Following are links to Rural Workforce Agencies in each state or territory.

- **New South Wales:** [NSW Rural Doctors Network](#)
- **Northern Territory:** [Northern Territory PHN](#)
- **Queensland:** [Health Workforce Queensland](#)
- **South Australia:** [Rural Doctors Workforce Agency](#)
- **Tasmania:** [The People Project](#)
- **Victoria:** [Rural Workforce Agency Victoria](#)
- **Western Australia:** [Rural Health West](#)

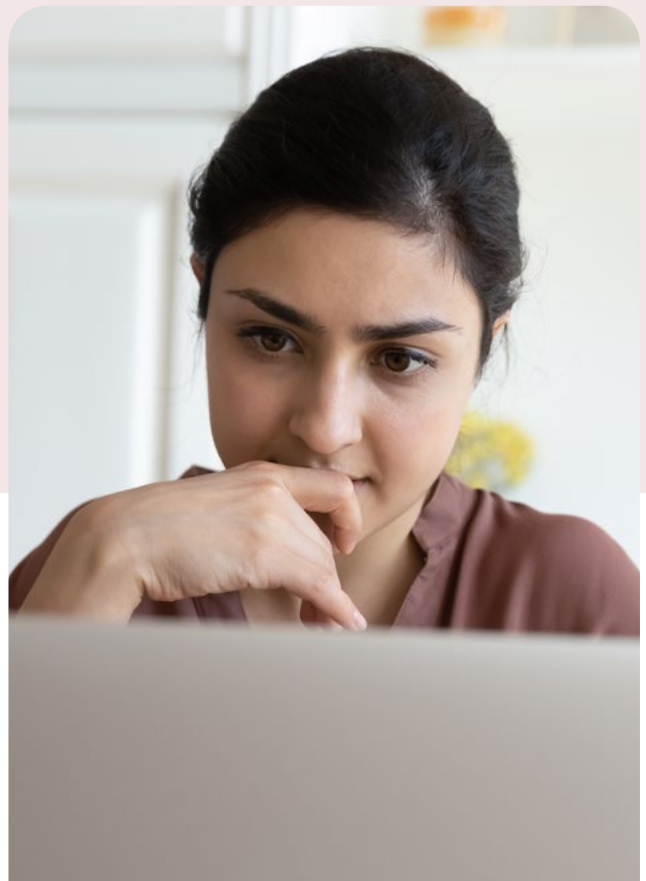


⁴⁶ Rural Workforce Agencies Network, *Rural Workforce Agencies*, n.d.



Tips for applying and interviewing for jobs in Australia

- ✓ **Understand the process.** Job application and interview expectations in Australia may differ from your home country.
- ✓ **Research the market.** Research job opportunities for you and your family, including supply and demand for your profession and average salaries.
- ✓ **Build your online presence.** Create a strong online profile using professional networks such as LinkedIn. Set up alerts on job search websites.
- ✓ **Check eligibility.** Understand job-specific requirements such as Ahpra registration, immunisation status and eligibility for a valid driver's licence. If you are a medical practitioner, check whether you will be required to bill Medicare and if so, whether the job is located in an area that qualifies for an exemption to the [10-year moratorium and scaling requirements](#).
- ✓ **Follow instructions.** Read job advertisements carefully and comply with the application guidelines (e.g. respond to the selection criteria and don't exceed word or page limits).
- ✓ **Prepare your application.** Research Australian employers' expectations for curricula vitae (CVs), cover letters and interviews. Adjust your CV accordingly and practise mock interviews. [Workforce Australia](#) offers general guidance on how to prepare your application and on interviews in the Australian context, and some health employers provide profession-specific templates. Rural Workforce Agencies can also help if you want to work in the primary care sector outside metropolitan areas.
- ✓ **Tailor each application.** Customise your CV and cover letter to match the job requirements.
- ✓ **Clarify if needed.** Contact the listed person on the job advertisement if you have questions about the role.
- ✓ **Interview effectively.** Use the Situation, Task, Action, Result (STAR) or Situation, Action, Outcome (SAO) methods to answer interview questions and demonstrate your experience.
- ✓ **Provide referees.** Most jobs require 2 or more referees, sometimes including your current manager. Always seek their permission before listing them, and brief them on the job description.
- ✓ **Budget appropriately.** Research costs for document translation and certification, applications, checks and relocation. Check if your employer will reimburse any of these costs.



2.3.5. Health employer requirements

When applying for a job in the Australian health sector, you will need to go through an employment screening process. Employers typically ask applicants to provide evidence of:

- identity
- qualifications
- work experience
- professional registration and/or accreditation
- up-to-date immunisation records, such as for Hepatitis B; Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR); Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (dTpa); and Influenza.

Applicants may also need to provide the results of their:

- health assessment
- national and overseas criminal history checks
- ‘working with children or vulnerable people’ checks for relevant roles. This is a screening process for people who work with or provide care for children or other vulnerable people. The checks consider the criminal history and relevant professional conduct findings of applicants and include ongoing monitoring for the duration of the check period (e.g. for 5 years). They are designed to protect vulnerable populations from sexual and other physical or psychological harm. States and territories run slightly different checks and requirements. You typically need an Australian residential address to apply.⁴⁷

Public and private health employers across health settings have slightly different employment processes and evidentiary requirements, such as for document translation and certification. Make sure you check your employer’s policy and speak to the hiring manager or the recruitment contact if you are unsure.

Some checks (e.g. the working with children check) may not be possible to complete before arriving in Australia. In this case, you may receive a conditional offer of employment, which means you are expected to pass the remaining checks before starting work.

What are evidentiary requirements?

Evidentiary requirements refer to the documentation you must provide to demonstrate that you meet specific requirements. This includes evidence of your qualifications and work experience, the results of police and working with children checks (if applicable) and more. Information is not shared between registration, migration or employment entities, so you will need to submit similar information multiple times. Each entity may have slightly different requirements regarding the format and validity period of the information, the people who can certify or translate documents and more.

It is important to check the requirements of the entity you are applying to. Providing the correct information in the correct format will help avoid delays and unnecessary expenses.



⁴⁷ Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, *Working with Children Checks*, n.d.

2.3.6. Health workforce incentives

The Australian, state and territory governments, and some local health employers across Australia offer a range of incentives to attract candidates and address workforce shortages in key areas. These incentives can be:

- financial (e.g. a sign-on bonus, relocation payments, a retention bonus)
- non-financial (e.g. training and research opportunities, accommodation assistance)
- available in specific locations (e.g. regional and rural areas) and/or
- available for health professions with an identified area of shortage.

Relocation incentives may be available to both domestic and internationally qualified health professionals moving to eligible areas. However, it is important to carefully review the eligibility criteria before making any relocation decisions. These incentives are not offered in all locations and change frequently, so do not rely on them as a guaranteed source of support. The recommendation is to plan your budget independently of any potential incentives to ensure you are financially stable throughout your move.

Most incentives are advertised publicly by states, territories or private health employers, with payments offered through the relevant industrial agreement. The process for applying for an incentive package and the supporting documents required may vary by location and employer. Incentive packages are regularly updated based on workforce needs across locations and services, so make sure you check the relevant websites for the most up-to-date information.

Incentives are generally advertised online by:

- employers
- state and territory health services
- the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing – [Workforce Incentive Program](#)
- the [Rural Workforce Agencies Network](#).

2.3.7. Partner career opportunities

If you are moving to Australia with a partner, it is important that they find meaningful employment and feel connected to the community. Australia's strong and diverse economy offers opportunities across many industries. There are a few potential ways to access partner employment support.

- Some states and territories have dedicated partner employment support programs. Search for '[state/territory] partner employment support' to check what is available.
- If you will be working in primary care, the Rural Workforce Agency in your chosen state or territory may be able to help.
- Some employers offer support to help connect new employees' partners with local employers in their field. Check with your employer.



Pamela,
*Registered nurse
Practising in Ballarat, VIC*

Moving overseas was a terrifying leap of faith but my husband and I, both registered nurses from the Philippines with 10 years' experience in stable managerial roles, took this step as newlyweds dreaming of a better work-life balance and a life we could grow together. Australia felt like the perfect place to begin.

I arrived first as an international student, completed a bridging program and gained registration. My employer welcomed me with incredible support. They picked me up from the bus station, provided furnished temporary housing, guided me through orientation and provided a relocation allowance. They also gave my husband a job in the same hospital while he pursued his registration, giving us stability and confidence as we started our new life.

Today, Richard is a registered nurse working in the same hospital, we have a beautiful baby and we are building our dream home in Ballarat. We have fallen in love with the family-oriented, relaxed community. I realised we didn't just find jobs, we found a life. To healthcare professionals considering the move: trust the process- the dream life in Australia is possible.

3

Preparing to move to Australia

This section will guide you through the practical steps you need to take when preparing for your move to Australia, from organising your finances and securing accommodation to understanding schooling and your child care options.

Moving to a new country can be daunting at first, but with the right preparation and guidance, the process can feel much smoother.



3.1. Relocation support

Some employers may offer relocation support as part of your employment package, or you may be able to access relocation support through federal, state or territory incentive programs or supporting organisations such as Rural Workforce Agencies.

It is important to note that not all employees offer relocation support, and when they do, the extent of the support can vary significantly. Some may offer financial incentives only. Others may provide personalised case management to help you find accommodation and settle into the local community, but this is less common.

It is best to check directly with your new employer to understand what is available and included in your employment package. If your employer does not offer relocation support, consider speaking to a relocation agent to help you with your move.



3.1.1. Budgeting for your move

Once you know what your income will be in Australia, draw up a simple budget that identifies your earnings and your expenses over the course of a week, fortnight or month. This will also help you plan your savings and manage your debts. There may be a few weeks between when you arrive in Australia, commence work and receive your first pay. Keep this in mind when budgeting for your move and ensure you have enough savings.

In addition to the cost of registration, visa and employment-related costs, relocation costs may include but are not limited to:

- shipping your belongings
- temporary accommodation (if not covered by your employer)
- upfront expenses to secure a rental property (e.g. a deposit)
- connection fees for utilities
- furniture and appliances
- child care and/or school fees, as well as uniforms, textbooks and technology for students
- health insurance.

Visit [MoneySmart](#) for help with budget planning.

Tips for relocating smoothly

- ✓ Check whether relocation support is part of your employment package.
- ✓ Plan to have 1 to 2 weeks between arriving in Australia and starting your job. This will give you time to set up bank accounts, transfer your driver's licence and finish other tasks.
- ✓ Consider whether you want a relocation agent to help you with your move. Relocation agents can help with tasks such as creating an Australian rental profile, searching for suitable properties and managing other aspects of your move.

Important considerations before working with relocation agents

- Costs can vary significantly, so compare fees and services across providers.
- Check the credentials of the agent and reviews of their services, to ensure they are reputable and experienced.
- Ask what is included in their service and what will cost extra.



3.2. Accommodation

It is important to organise accommodation before you arrive in Australia. As arranging long-term accommodation from overseas can be difficult, consider temporary accommodation options.

This could include a short-term rental, such as a serviced apartment, or an affordable hotel or motel. Some employers offer relocation assistance, which may include temporary accommodation or grants, so be sure to check what is included in your employment package.

For long-term accommodation, many newcomers to Australia rent or lease a property as it is more flexible and affordable than buying one in the short term. Temporary visa holders also face restrictions on purchasing property. Find out more about [foreign investment in Australia](#). If you are a permanent resident, you have the same rights as Australian citizens when it comes to buying property. Find out more about [buying a house in Australia](#).

It is relatively common in Australia to use a licensed real estate agent to source information and find a property. Two main websites are used to advertise real estate in Australia:

- [Domain](#)
- [Real Estate](#).

You can find properties for rent and sale on these sites, along with information about property prices and trends across different areas in Australia.

Before you arrive in Australia, it is a good idea to research the real estate market in the area you will be living. This will help you understand housing availability and average rental costs. Many parts of Australia are currently experiencing housing shortages and rising prices, making it challenging to find long-term accommodation.

Each state and territory has cities or regions made up of suburbs. Every suburb is identified by a 4-digit postcode. Research the suburb and postcode where you want to live to refine your search.

Once you arrive in Australia, you can arrange to view properties in person. Such property inspections usually occur twice weekly, depending on the state or territory.

Renting in Australia

- **Rental applications:** To apply for a rental property, you typically need to prepare a rental application that includes your rental history, references from previous landlords or real estate agents, and details about your current financial circumstances.
- **Know your rights:** Rental regulation in Australia is governed by state and territory laws, rather than a single system. Once you know where you will be living, research the rental laws and your rights as a tenant in your state or territory. This includes information on maximum rent in advance, notice periods for vacating a property and limits on rent increases. Search 'Rental regulator [state or territory]' to find your local regulatory body.
- **Rental agreement:** Your rental agreement should outline the responsibilities of the landlord and the tenant, including who is responsible for paying for utility bills and services related to the property. Typically, tenants pay the utility bills, while landlords cover property maintenance costs such as council rates.
- **Rental bond and deposit:** Most rental agreements require the tenant to pay a bond equivalent to 4 weeks' rent, as well as a deposit. The bond must be lodged with the relevant state or territory agency and will be returned at the end of the tenancy, minus any costs for damages or unpaid rent.
- **Furnishings:** Most long-term rental properties in Australia are unfurnished. Furnished rental properties are hard to find and will cost more. Be sure to factor in the cost of furniture and whitegoods (e.g. a fridge and washing machine) when budgeting for your move to Australia.

Find out more about [settling in Australia](#).

3.3. Child care and the school system

If you are moving with children, it is important to research and arrange child care and schooling before you arrive in Australia.

3.3.1. Early education

Child care is available for children from birth up to the age of 5. The Australian Government's [child care finder](#) can help you find your nearest suitable child care centre.

[Starting Blocks](#), which rates child care quality, may help you choose the right option for you and your family. Child care subsidies are available through Centrelink to Australian citizens and permanent residents. However, most temporary visa holders are not eligible for child care subsidies. Find out more about the [Child Care Subsidy](#).

If your family is eligible for child care subsidies (i.e. through a permanent residency visa), you must provide evidence that your child(ren) meet the Australian [immunisation requirements](#). This includes getting immunisation records from your home country, including the batch numbers. Be sure to request these from your family doctor before you leave your home country.

Once you arrive in Australia and have registered for Medicare and received your Medicare card, visit a local registered vaccination provider (e.g. a pharmacy) to have these records uploaded to the [Australian Immunisation Register](#). You may be charged a small fee for this service. Find out more about [adding overseas immunisations to the AIR](#).

There are often waitlists for child care services. If you need child care when you arrive in Australia, start enquiring with centres as soon as you know where you will live and work.



48 Study Australia, [Schools](#), n.d.

3.3.2. School

School education spans 13 years and is generally compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16. There are some minor differences across states and territories. Table 2 shows the 4 stages of the school system.

Table 2: School stages

Stage	School grades
Primary school	Foundation (also called preparatory school or kindergarten) to Year 6 or Year 7
Secondary school (or high school)	Years 7 or 8 to Year 10
Senior secondary school (or senior secondary college)	Year 11 to Year 12
Tertiary education	Higher education, university, vocational education and training (VET)

Australia has different types of schools, including:

- government (public) and non-government (private or independent) schools
- faith-based schools
- schools that cater for students with special needs
- schools that cater for different age groups and study levels (e.g. primary schools and high schools)
- schools that are based on educational philosophies (e.g. Montessori and Steiner schools).⁴⁸

Some parents choose to homeschool their children. State and territory education authorities regulate homeschooling.

All schools across Australia provide quality education, regardless of location. The Australian, state and territory governments primarily fund government schools. Australian citizens and permanent residents generally do not pay tuition fees for government schools. In most states and territories, temporary visa holders must pay a temporary resident application and/or tuition fee for government schools. School fees vary by school year and state or territory, but can range from A\$5,000 to A\$10,000 per year per child. Other school-related items, such as mandatory uniforms, excursion fees and after-school care, are added expenses. You may be granted an exemption from tuition fees if you work in an eligible regional area or hold a particular visa.

Government schools sometimes have catchment areas or zones. This means that if you live within a school's catchment area, your child is guaranteed a place at that school.

The school year commences in late January and runs until mid-December each year. Primary and secondary schools have 4 school terms per year. School hours are generally from 8:30 am or 9 am to 3 pm or 3:30 pm, Monday to Friday. Term dates and school hours vary across states, territories and different types of schools, so check online information from the relevant state or territory education department for further information.

- **Australian Capital Territory:** [Education Directorate; List of ACT public schools](#)
- **New South Wales:** [Department of Education; NSW School Finder](#)
- **Northern Territory:** [Department of Education and Training; Schools directory](#)
- **Queensland:** [Education Queensland; Schools directory](#)
- **South Australia:** [Department for Education; Find your local school or preschool](#)
- **Tasmania:** [Department for Education, Children and Young People; Find your local school](#)
- **Victoria:** [Department of Education; Find my School](#)
- **Western Australia:** [Department of Education; Find a school](#)

This information has been sourced from [Services Australia](#) and [Study Australia](#).



Out of School Hours care

Most primary schools have Out of School Hours (OOSH) care programs that provide supervision for children before and after school on school days for a fee. There is high demand for OOSH care and spots can fill up quickly. If you plan to start working immediately after arriving in Australia and expect that your child(ren) will need OOSH care, it's a good idea to speak to the school before your move and try to lock in regular days in advance.



Anu Registered nurse Practising in VIC

I grew up and trained as a nurse in India, where I also began my practice, before moving to New Zealand and eventually settling in Australia almost three years ago with my husband and our two children.

We chose Australia for the wider opportunities in nursing and the chance to build a better future as a family. The transition has been incredibly rewarding, our children have settled beautifully into school, one in high school and the other in primary school. We have even been able to start our own restaurant.

What I value most is the work-life balance, flexibility, and the genuine support within the healthcare community. Being surrounded by colleagues who become friends makes each day more meaningful.

My advice to other health professionals is to take that step – Australia offers not only career growth and education opportunities, but also a supportive environment where you can truly thrive both professionally and personally.

3.4. Organising health insurance

Arranging health insurance is an important step to ensure you and your family are covered while living and working in Australia.

3.4.1. Private health insurance

It is strongly recommended that you arrange private health insurance for yourself and any family members relocating with you, regardless of whether it is a visa condition. This will ensure you are covered for any unplanned medical and or hospital care you may need while in Australia. Various private health insurance providers offer Overseas Visitors Health Cover (OVHC). If OVHC is required for your visa, make sure to purchase the specific type and level of insurance required for your visa, as this can vary by visa type.



Buying private health insurance

- Private health insurance can be expensive, and there may still be gap payments when accessing health services. It is important to do your research and find a policy that suits your needs.
- Search for 'Overseas Visitors Insurance Australia' or 'Overseas Visitors Health Cover Australia' online or use an insurance comparison site to compare policies from multiple providers.

Find out more about [private health insurance in Australia](#).



4

When you arrive in Australia

This section will help you navigate the first important steps when you arrive in Australia, from setting up a local phone number and bank account to other practical essentials that will help you settle in and feel at home as quickly as possible.



4.1. Setting up an Australian phone number

Australia has 3 major mobile network providers: Telstra, Optus and Vodafone. In addition, many smaller providers use these networks to provide their services. The major providers have stores in shopping centres; sell SIM cards online, at airports and supermarkets; and offer e-SIMs.

Mobile network coverage and reliability vary by location, particularly in regional and rural areas. Before you sign up for a mobile phone plan, check the network coverage for the areas where you will live and work. You can do this by searching for your postcode on the coverage maps available on providers' websites:

- [Optus Network Coverage](#)
- [Telstra Network coverage maps](#)
- [Vodafone Network Coverage Map](#).

If you are unsure whether a provider has coverage in the areas you will live and work, ask your employer.

Visit the [Australian Competition & Consumer Commission](#) for unbiased information about choosing a mobile phone service.



4.2. Medicare

Medicare is Australia's universal health insurance scheme, providing access to health services at low or no cost. Medicare is available to Australian citizens, permanent residents and other eligible individuals, such as those visiting or holding temporary visas from countries with [reciprocal health care agreements](#). Visit [Services Australia](#) for the eligibility criteria to enrol in Medicare.

4.2.1. Accessing Australia's public health services as a consumer

If you meet the eligibility requirements for Medicare, you will need to enrol to access its benefits as a health service user. You must be living in Australia to enrol. It can take some time for applications to be processed and to receive a Medicare card, so prioritise your enrolment as soon as you arrive in Australia. Find out more about [enrolling in Medicare](#).

4.2.2. Claiming Medicare benefits as a provider

As a health professional in Australia, you may interact with Medicare as part of your role to claim Medicare benefits for approved services. This means Medicare pays for some or all of the patient's treatment.⁴⁹ Health service providers who may access Medicare benefits include medical practitioners, nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives, eligible allied health professionals, and dental practitioners working in private practice.

Your employer will let you know whether you need to bill Medicare. If you do, you must have a Medicare provider number, and if your role involves prescribing medicines, you may also need a Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) prescriber number.⁵⁰

To apply for a provider and/or prescriber number, speak with your employer and follow the instructions at [Services Australia](#).

Find out more about Medicare in [Working in Australia: an orientation to the health system](#).



The 10-year moratorium

Medicare benefits are the amount of government funding paid for a provided service.⁵¹ If you are an international medical graduate and need to access Medicare benefits as a provider, you must work in designated areas of workforce shortage for **at least 10 years** from the time of your medical registration in Australia. These areas are known as [Distribution Priority Areas](#) for general practitioners (GPs) and [District of Workforce Shortage](#) for non-GP specialists. This is a requirement under section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (Cth), and is also known as the '10-year moratorium'.⁵²

The level of workforce shortages and access to local medical services determine these locations. Location restrictions are an important factor to consider when moving to Australia, as it will influence where you can work and, ultimately, where you will live. The [Health Workforce Locator](#) shows the geographical classification of any location in Australia.

Find out more information about [Medicare access for medical practitioners and specialists](#).

49 Department of Health, Ageing and Disability, [Accessing Medicare for health practitioners and industry](#), March 2024.

50 Services Australia, [Provider and prescriber numbers](#), June 2024.

51 Services Australia, [About Medicare](#), 2025.

52 Department of Health, Ageing and Disability, [Medicare access for doctors and specialists](#), 2025.

4.3. Personal finance

Understanding how to manage your finances in Australia is an important part of settling into your new life, from opening a bank account and understanding the tax system to managing your day-to-day expenses.

4.3.1. Setting up an Australian bank account

To get paid and make financial transactions in Australia, you will need to open an Australian bank account. Foreign nationals can open bank accounts in Australia. Most banks require at least 100 points of identification (ID) for verification. This can include a combination of such documents as a passport, driver's licence, utility bill or bank statement. Major banks like Commonwealth Bank (CommBank), Westpac, NAB and ANZ typically accept foreign identity documents, including passports and national ID cards. However, smaller banks or credit unions may prefer Australian-issued documents. Most banks allow you to open an account online from overseas if you have an approved visa and apply within the required timeframe before your arrival (e.g. 14 days). Once you arrive in Australia, you will need to visit a branch to activate the account.

There are many banks to choose from. For unbiased information about banking in Australia, visit [MoneySmart](#). You may also wish to visit the websites of private organisations that provide product comparisons across different banks.

Once you have an active Australian bank account, you can use it as proof of identity or for other purposes (e.g. rental applications or employment checks).

4.3.2. Tax

In Australia, everyone who earns an income over \$18,200 per year must pay tax (as at June 2025).⁵³ We have a progressive tax system, meaning that the higher your income, the more tax you pay. Most tax is collected through 'pay as you go (PAYG)' instalments, which means it is automatically deducted from your income each time your employer pays you, on behalf of the [Australian Taxation Office \(ATO\)](#). The ATO is the agency responsible for collecting tax in Australia.

Setting up a tax file number

Anyone who earns an income in Australia must have a [tax file number \(TFN\)](#). A TFN is a personal reference number in the Australian tax and superannuation system and is free to apply for. Once you have a TFN, it is yours for life, even if you change jobs, change your name, move interstate or travel overseas. To apply for a TFN, you need an Australian residential address, and the processing time can be up to 28 days.⁵⁴ While you can start working without a TFN, you will be taxed at the highest rate if you do not provide it to your employer within 28 days of starting your job. This means you should set up your TFN as soon as you arrive in Australia. Once you receive your TFN, you need to share it with your employer, as the ATO will not send it to them directly. It is also beneficial to provide your TFN to your bank. If you don't, the bank will be required by law to withhold tax on any interest earned on your account.⁵⁵

Tax return

At the end of each financial year – 1 July to 30 June – you must prepare and lodge a [tax return](#). You can do this yourself or through a registered tax agent. You can claim [tax deductions](#) for work-related expenses to reduce your taxable income. For example, you may be able to claim deductions for registration and association membership fees, uniforms, and personal protective equipment. See the [ATO website](#) for more information.



53 Australian Taxation Office, *Tax rates – Australian resident*, June 2025.

54 Australian Taxation Office, *What is a tax file number?*, November 2025.

55 Commonwealth Bank of Australia, *What happens if I don't add a Tax File Number (TFN)?*, n.d.

4.3.3. Medicare levy

The Australian Government funds Medicare through general revenue and income tax, including the Medicare levy and Medicare levy surcharge. The Medicare levy is 2% of a person's taxable income and is paid in addition to other taxes paid on taxable income.

The Medicare levy surcharge is payable on top of the Medicare levy and is paid if:

- a person earns income above a certain level
- a person, spouse and dependent children do not have an appropriate level of private hospital insurance cover.

You may not have to pay the Medicare levy if you:

- are a foreign resident temporarily working in Australia
- are ineligible for Medicare
- have certain medical conditions.

Find out more about the [Medicare levy exemption](#).

4.3.4. Salary sacrificing

Some employers offer the option of salary sacrificing (also known as 'salary packaging' or 'total remuneration packaging'). In this arrangement, you and your employer agree that you will receive less income before tax and, in return, your employer will pay for certain benefits of similar value to you. This means you pay less tax on your income.

These benefits are called 'fringe benefits'. They may include general living expenses, such as car, mortgage, rent or credit card payments; meals; entertainment; relocation expenses; housing expenses in remote locations; or novated leasing of a vehicle.

Speak to your employer to find out whether salary sacrificing is available and, if so, which benefits are available. Find out more about [salary sacrificing](#).

4.3.5. Superannuation

[Superannuation](#), or 'super', is the main way most Australians save for their retirement. It is compulsory for employers to pay a percentage of employees' ordinary time earnings (12% as at 1 July 2025) into their super fund. Overtime is generally excluded. This money is invested over the long term for your retirement. Sometimes, super is advertised as part of your salary package, or in addition to the advertised salary. Check with your employer if you are unsure.

You can choose the super fund you want your superannuation contributions to be paid into. There are various tools and resources available to compare super fund options, including [MoneySmart](#) and [YourSuper comparison tool](#). If you do not choose a super fund, your super will be paid into your employer's default super fund.

If you plan to stay in Australia long term, you can only withdraw your super in certain circumstances, such as when you retire or turn 65. If you move away from Australia, you may be eligible to receive any accrued super (and any earnings and other contributions) as a [departing Australia superannuation payment \(DASP\)](#) after you leave. This amount will be taxed.

Find out more about [superannuation](#).



4.4. Employment conditions

As a health professional working in Australia, it is important to familiarise yourself with your employment conditions, including your rights and entitlements.

Keep in mind that the information in this section is meant for general guidance only. The specific award, enterprise agreement (EA) and employment conditions stated in your contract will govern your employment. Be sure to refer to these resources to understand your entitlements. Ask your employer for help if you need to locate or interpret employment information. Find out more about [employment conditions in Australia](#).

4.4.1. National standards, awards and enterprise agreements

Australia has a well-developed employment system, with a set of national standards of employment for all workers.⁵⁶ The [Fair Work Act 2009](#) (Cth) regulates most private sector jobs, with oversight by the [Fair Work Commission](#) and the [Fair Work Ombudsman](#). In the public sector, employment conditions for health professionals are typically set through state and territory awards or enterprise agreements and are governed separately.

Many industries, including healthcare, are covered by industrial awards that set minimum standards for pay and working conditions. In most healthcare settings, health professionals are covered by an award based on their profession. Examples of common Fair Work awards for health professionals include:

- [Health Services Award \[MA000027\]](#)
- [Medical Practitioners Award \[MA000031\]](#)
- [Nurses Award \[MA000034\]](#).

There are exceptions to the awards that apply to health professionals. For example, general practitioners (GPs) working in private practice are not covered under the Medical Practitioners Award, so they must negotiate their pay and working conditions directly with their employer. Find out more about [awards](#) in Australia.

Enterprise agreements (EAs) are workplace-specific agreements negotiated between employers and employees (who are often represented by unions). These agreements set pay rates, conditions and benefits that go beyond the minimum standards in industry awards. EAs provide the flexibility to tailor conditions to the needs of a particular health service while ensuring employees are 'better off overall' under the Fair Work Act. Compared to awards, EAs commonly include higher wages, additional leave, and provisions that support workforce retention and operational requirements in hospitals and health services.

All employees, regulated workers and independent contractors have the right to join or not join a union. This is called 'freedom of association'. Each union has its own rules about who is eligible to join. For example, unions may represent workers in certain industries or occupations. Freedom of association also means that all workers can choose whether to be represented in their workplace by a union and take part in lawful industrial activities.⁵⁷



Eoin Senior Speech Pathologist Practising in Perth, WA

Moving to Australia has been one of the most rewarding decisions of my career. I made the move for a change of pace and the opportunity to grow professionally, and it has delivered on both. Working here has given me exposure to a diverse and engaging role, alongside supportive colleagues and a highly skilled clinical team. There is a strong sense of camaraderie, as well as genuine investment from leadership, which makes a real difference day to day.

Outside of work, the lifestyle has been a huge bonus. The work-life balance, competitive pay, and proximity to the coast have all contributed to a very positive experience. I currently live in Perth with my housemate, Kristy, who is a local.

My advice to other healthcare professionals considering the move is simple: go for it. If it is not for you, you can always return home, but chances are you will love it here.

⁵⁶ Australian Trade and Investment Commission, [Employing people in Australia](#), 2026.

⁵⁷ Fair Work Ombudsman, [Role of unions and employer associations](#), n.d.

4.4.2. Independent contractors

Some health professionals may work as independent contractors under an Australian Business Number (ABN). An independent contractor (also known as a contractor) provides services for another business or person but is not employed by them. This is common for medical specialists, dentists and some allied health professionals working in private settings. Contractors do not have the same rights and entitlements as employees. Businesses are not obliged to provide many of the entitlements afforded to employees, such as minimum paid leave and superannuation. Contractors generally set their own fees and arrange their time, including work hours and holidays, and are responsible for managing their own taxation and superannuation payments. Find out more about the difference between contractors and employees.

It is common for health professionals working as contractors in private practice to receive a percentage of their patient billings as income, with the remainder paid to the practice to cover room utilisation and costs such as for administrative staff salaries, equipment and utilities.

4.4.3. Leave entitlements

Your leave entitlements in Australia will depend on your type of employment, and eligibility requirements can vary from employer to employer. Common types of leave for full-time and part-time employees include annual leave, paid sick or carer's leave and paid parental leave. Most forms of paid leave are available to employees in permanent roles, while parental leave usually requires a minimum period of continuous employment. It's important to note that national standards govern leave entitlements and they are not transferable between states and territories.

Australia recognises the vital role carers play in supporting the wellbeing of families and communities. Health employers often promote carer-inclusive workplace policies, flexible work arrangements and access to carer support networks to ensure staff with caring responsibilities can balance their work and personal commitments.



Australian minimum leave entitlements for employees

Following are commonly used leave entitlements.

- Annual leave: This is also known as 'holiday pay'. Full-time and part-time employees get at least 4 weeks (20 days) of annual leave per year, based on their ordinary hours of work. The leave accumulates gradually during the year and any unused annual leave will roll over from year to year.
- Sick and carer's leave: This can be taken for personal illness, including mental ill health, for caring responsibilities or for family emergencies. Full-time employees are entitled to 10 sick days per year. The leave entitlement for part-time employees is calculated on a pro-rata basis.
- Parental leave: This can be taken when a child is born or adopted. The minimum parental leave entitlement is 12 months of unpaid leave, with the option to request an additional 12 months. Many health employers provide paid parental leave to full-time and part-time employees for at least 14 weeks. The Australian Government also provides up to 24 weeks of paid leave at the minimum wage for Australian citizen and permanent resident families.
- Public holidays: The number of public holidays observed in Australia ranges from 10 to 13 per year, depending on the state or territory. You may be entitled to extra pay or time off when you work on a public holiday.

Find out more about other minimum leave entitlements.

4.5. Driving and public transport

Whether you choose to drive or use public transport, getting around in Australia involves understanding everything from transferring your driver's licence to navigating the transport options available in your new city or town.

4.5.1. Driving in Australia

The Australian road network is extensive, covering approximately 877,651 kilometres.⁵⁸ Road signs in Australia are largely standardised to ensure safety, with minor differences between states and territories in warning signs and tourism signage.

Road rules

The most important thing to know about driving in Australia is that we drive on the left side of the road.

The road rules are strictly enforced, including regulations on seatbelt use, mobile phone use, driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, speed limits, parking and more. Heavy penalties apply for breaking road rules, including fines, licence suspension and imprisonment for serious offences.

Transferring your driver's licence

In Australia, state and territory governments are responsible for regulating and enforcing the road rules, as well as issuing driver's licences and vehicle registration. This means states and territories may have slightly different rules. Most states and territories allow you to drive with an overseas licence for 3 to 6 months before you need to apply for a local licence. However, since Australian driver's licences are the most used form of photo ID locally, you should consider transferring your driver's licence as soon as possible after arriving in Australia. Service centres in most states and territories are open Monday to Friday during business hours, so try to complete this task before you start work. If your licence is not in English, you will need an International Driving Permit before you leave your home country.

See the website of the relevant agency in your state or territory for more information about driver's licences.

- **Australian Capital Territory:** [Access Canberra](#)
- **New South Wales:** [Service NSW](#)
- **Northern Territory:** [Motor Vehicle Registry \(MVR\)](#)
- **Queensland:** [Department of Transport and Main Roads](#)
- **South Australia:** [Service SA](#)
- **Tasmania:** [Transport Services](#)
- **Victoria:** [VicRoads](#)
- **Western Australia:** [Transport WA](#)



⁵⁸ National Road Safety Strategy, *Fact sheet: Infrastructure planning and investment*, n.d.

Owning a car

Depending on your access to public transport, the distance between your home and work, and your lifestyle, you may choose to buy a car in Australia. Car dealerships can be found in cities and some regional towns. You can buy a second-hand car locally or through online platforms such as [CarSales](#). Some companies can conduct pre-purchase checks for second-hand cars on your behalf if you are unable to. Be aware that owning a car comes with several costs, including annual registration fees and compulsory insurance. Some states also charge tolls for use of certain roads such as tunnels and highways.

You may also consider renting a car when you first arrive in Australia, especially while you decide whether to buy one. Research the cost of car rentals in the area where you will be living to ensure you have enough savings to cover the costs when you arrive.

4.5.2. Public transport

In Australia, every state and territory has its own public transport system. Major cities have extensive public transport networks with multiple modes, including trains, buses, trams and ferries. Most major cities now use electronic or prepaid cards instead of paper tickets, and some also allow contactless payments with a credit or debit card.

The public transport smartcards in the major cities are as follows.

- **Adelaide, South Australia:** [Metro Card](#)
- **Brisbane, Queensland:** [Translink Go Card](#)
- **Canberra, Australian Capital Territory:** [MyWay](#)
- **Darwin, Northern Territory:** [Tap & Ride Card](#)
- **Hobart, Tasmania:** [Metro Greencard](#)
- **Melbourne, Victoria:** [myki](#)
- **Perth, Western Australia:** [SmartRider](#)
- **Sydney, New South Wales:** [Opal Card](#)

Outside of major cities, public transport networks in Australia are generally less extensive. Most states and territories have train and bus services in regional areas; however, these services may not run as frequently as urban networks. Speak to your employer before you arrive to understand what modes of transport are available between your accommodation and workplace.



4.6. Australian slang

Australians are known for our laid-back attitude, and that is reflected in the way we speak. We tend to speak very quickly and use slang to shorten words in everyday conversation.

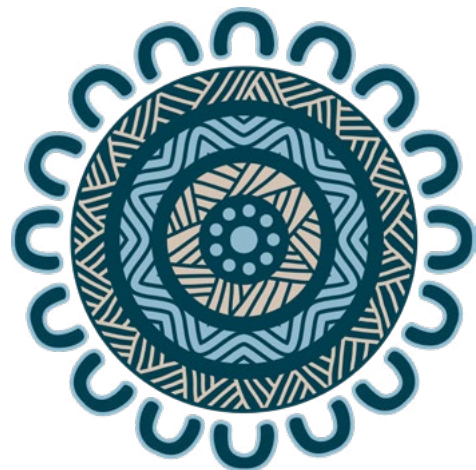
When you arrive in Australia, picking up a few key phrases can go a long way towards helping you feel connected and chat with the locals. Here are some examples:

- **Ambo:** ambulance paramedic
- **Aussie:** Australian
- **Arvo:** afternoon
- **Barbie** or **BBQ:** barbeque
- **Bikkie:** biscuit
- **Bottle-o:** liquor store
- **Brekkie:** breakfast
- **Brolly:** umbrella
- **Cheers:** thank you
- **Crook:** sick or unwell
- **Cuppa:** cup of tea or coffee
- **Down under:** Australia and New Zealand
- **Esky:** insulated food/drink container
- **Fair dinkum:** true, real, genuine
- **G'day:** hello
- **Mate:** friend or a friendly way to address someone
- **Mozzies:** mosquitos
- **No worries:** no problem or don't worry about it
- **Servo:** service/petrol station
- **Snag:** sausage
- **Sticky beak:** having a close look at something, or a nosey person
- **Thongs:** flip flops
- **Ta:** thank you.

Visit these websites for more information about Australian slang.

- [From avo to arvo: the ultimate guide to Australian slang](#)
- [Australian slang dictionary](#)
- [Aussie slang words and phrases](#)
- [100 Australian slang words and phrases](#)
- [A guide to Australian workplace slang](#)

Watch [RACGP: Aussie slang for Doctors in Australia](#) on YouTube for helpful hints.



4.7. Climate, extreme weather events, wildlife and water recreation safety

Australia is known for its diverse climate and extreme weather, from hot summers and tropical storms in the north to cooler temperatures in the south. It is important to be prepared for the unique weather patterns of the region you will be calling home.

4.7.1. Climate and extreme weather events

Australia experiences a variety of extreme weather events due to its diverse climate, geography and environment. It is common for large parts of the country to move from hot, dry conditions to cool, wet conditions. Extreme weather events, including bushfires, floods and heatwaves, are linked to these drought and flood cycles.⁵⁹

Extreme weather events in Australia include:

- [heatwaves and temperature extremes](#)
- [floods](#)
- [bushfires, grassfires and air pollution](#)
- [storms](#)
- [tropical cyclones](#)
(November to April in tropical regions)
- [drought](#)
- [coastal erosion](#)
- [ocean warming and acidification](#).

Each state and territory experiences extreme weather differently. Being prepared for these events requires you to understand the:

- the climate where you live
- weather warnings for your area
- the history of natural disasters in your area
- the terrain of your property and local area.



⁵⁹ Australian Climate Service, [Hazards](#), 2026.

⁶⁰ Australian Wildlife Conservancy, [Explore wildlife](#), 2026.

Helpful resources for extreme weather events include the following:

- [The Bureau of Meteorology \(BOM\): Know your weather. Know your risk.](#)
- Healthdirect: [Extreme weather](#)
- MyGov: [Being prepared for a natural disaster](#)
- the State Emergency Service (SES) for your state or territory
- local radio stations in regional areas that provide emergency warnings during extreme weather events. Use the Commercial Radio & Audio [find a station](#) tool to tune in to local radio stations in your area.

4.7.2. Wildlife

Australia is home to an incredible range of native wildlife, most of which is not found anywhere else in the world.⁶⁰ This includes well-known animals like kangaroos, koalas and wombats, and more elusive creatures such as echidnas and platypus. Australia is also known for dangerous species, including snakes, spiders, sharks, crocodiles and jellyfish. While encounters with these animals are rare and fatalities are even rarer, it is important to be aware of the potential risks, follow local advice and keep a safe distance.

Here are some helpful links to information on Australian wildlife.

- Australian Museum – [Snakes, spiders, sharks and other dangerous animals](#)
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy – [Explore wildlife](#).

Australia is a big country, so different areas are home to different wildlife species. Following are some helpful sites about local wildlife in different states and territories:

- **Australian Capital Territory Government:** [Wildlife Management](#)
- **NSW National Parks:** [Wildlife encounters](#)
- **Northern Territory Government:** [Wildlife in NT](#)
- **Queensland Government:** [Living with wildlife](#)
- **South Australia Government:** [Living with wildlife](#)
- **Tasmania Parks & Wildlife Service:** [Wildlife](#)
- **Victorian Government:** [Wildlife](#)
- **Western Australian Government:** [Living with native wildlife](#).

4.7.3. Water recreation safety

With nearly 12,000 beaches, many inland waterways such as rivers and lakes, and community and home swimming pools, water-based activities are an everyday part of life for many Australians. However, waterways can be dangerous. Ocean beaches may have strong currents (called 'rips'), exposed rocks and hazardous surf. The conditions of rivers, lakes and creeks can change quickly and may include hidden dangers such as submerged objects or slippery rocks. Knowing how to swim and identifying potential risks are essential.⁶¹

Tips for water recreation safety

- Only swim at beaches that are patrolled by lifeguards.
- Always swim between the red and yellow flags.
- Look for and follow the safety instructions (often signs) for local hazards such as strong currents.
- Rivers and lakes may look calm, but they can also be dangerous. Always take care and look out for changing conditions or hazards such as submerged objects.
- Always supervise children around water.
- Avoid swimming at dawn, dusk or night, as visibility is low and sharks are more active at those times.
- Wear a lifejacket when boating.
- Protect yourself from the sun and stay hydrated by drinking lots of water.

Visit [Beach Safe](#) and [Royal Life Saving Australia](#) for more information.



61 Australian Water Safety Council, *Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030*, 2021.

5

Living in Australia

This section will provide you with an overview of the mental health, wellbeing and support services in Australia to help you and your family access the right resources as you navigate this big life change.



5.1. Mental health, wellbeing and support service



Moving away from your home country and establishing yourself in a new community can be both rewarding and challenging. You may experience stressors such as cultural adjustment, isolation from your support network at home and the demands of working in a new environment. It is important to acknowledge these pressures and seek support early.

5.1.1. Mental health and wellbeing

Staying connected with peers and your local community, maintaining a work–life balance and reaching out for professional help when needed can make a big difference in your overall wellbeing. You can access a range of support services in Australia.

Key mental health support services

If you or your family need mental health support, a variety of free and confidential services are available.

- **Beyond Blue:** 24/7 support for anxiety, depression and suicide prevention (1300 22 4636 | <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>)
- **Hand-n-Hand:** Independent peer support for all health professionals, care staff and non-clinical staff (<https://www.handnhand.org.au/>)
- **Headspace:** mental health support and information for people aged between 15 and 25, and parents and carers of young people experiencing mental ill health (1800 650 890 | <https://headspace.org.au/>)
- **Lifeline:** 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention (13 11 14 | <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>).

See the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency's (Ahpra's) website for a broader list of support services, including support for specific health professions, and translation and accessibility support services.

Most healthcare employers also provide an Employee Assistance Program that includes mental health support and counselling services. You can use your personal leave or sick leave for mental health reasons, including to seek professional support.

You can access private mental health services provided by professionals such as psychologists and counsellors. If you are eligible for Medicare, part of the costs may be covered by getting a [Mental Health Treatment Plan](#) from your general practitioner.



Be kind to yourself

- ✓ The initial period when you arrive in Australia may be very challenging and overwhelming, but it will become easier with time.
- ✓ Give yourself time to learn. Seek the support of your colleagues and local community. Asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.

5.1.2. Other support services

You can also access the following free support services in Australia.

Domestic and family violence support

- **1800RESPECT:** national 24/7 support for domestic, family and sexual violence
(1800 737 732 | <https://1800respect.org.au/>)
- **MensLine Australia:** 24/7 telephone and online support for men
(1300 789 978 | <https://mensline.org.au/>)
- **Kids Helpline:** 24/7 online and phone counselling service for people aged 5 to 25
(1800 55 1800 | <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>)

Emergency and health services

- **Triple Zero (000):** for police, fire or ambulance (000)
- **Poisons Information Centre:** for poisoning or bites
(13 11 26 | <https://www.poisonsinfo.nsw.gov.au/>)
- **Healthdirect:** free Australian health advice
(1800 022 222 | <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/>)



5.1.3. Professional associations and peer support networks

Joining professional associations or peer support networks for your profession can be a good way to build connections and access support as you transition to work in Australia. These groups advocate for their members, deliver professional development and education, and offer networking opportunities, peer support and mentoring. Professional associations and peer support networks include, but are not limited to, the following organisations.

Allied health

- [Allied Health Professions Australia](#)
- [Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association](#)
- [Australian Association of Social Workers](#)
- [Australasian College of Paramedicine](#)
- [Audiology Australia](#)
- [Australian Chiropractors Association](#)
- [Australian Dental Association](#)
- [Australian Dental Prosthetists Association](#)
- [Australian and New Zealand Society of Nuclear Medicine](#)
- [Australian Orthotic Prosthetic Association](#)
- [Australian Physiotherapy Association](#)
- [Australian Podiatry Association](#)
- [Australian Psychological Society](#)
- [Australian Society of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy](#)
- [Australian Sonographers Association](#)
- [Dietitians Association of Australia](#)
- [Exercise and Sports Science Australia](#)
- [Occupational Therapy Australia](#)
- [Optometry Australia](#)
- [Oral Health Association of Australia](#)
- [Orthoptics Australia](#)
- [Osteopathy Australia](#)
- [Pharmaceutical Society of Australia](#)
- [Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health](#)
- [Speech Pathology Australia](#)



Medical

- Australian Medical Association – see relevant state or territory website
- [Primary Health Networks](#)
- [Rural Doctors Association of Australia](#)
- Specialist medical colleges

Nursing & midwifery

- [Australian College of Nursing](#)
- [Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation](#)
- [Council of Remote Area Nurses of Australia](#)
- [Primary Health Networks](#)
(for nurses and midwives working in primary health)

5.1.4. Community and multicultural support

Community centres and libraries often host free or low-cost programs, making it easy to meet people and get involved. Volunteering, joining local sports teams or attending community events are great ways to connect with others and feel part of the local community. Some areas may also have groups that connect people from the same cultural background. These connections can help you ease into your new environment and support a sense of belonging.

There are [multicultural organisations](#) in each state and territory that deliver multicultural support and assistance to migrants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Some of these organisations focus on supporting refugees, but many offer support to migrants more broadly. Local councils and cultural groups also offer multicultural support and means of connecting with the local community. Search your local council website or visit its office when you arrive in Australia to find out more about multicultural services available in your area.

5.1.5. Social security (Centrelink)

In Australia, [Centrelink](#), a division of [Services Australia](#), delivers social security payments and services.

Centrelink provides a wide range of services for Australian citizens and permanent residents who are:

- raising children
- looking for work
- doing an apprenticeship or traineeship
- studying
- living with disability or a medical condition, or caring for someone who is retired or thinking about retirement.

Temporary visa holders are typically not eligible for social security payments.

Visit [Centrelink](#) to find out more about available services and whether you or your family members are eligible.

5.2. Understanding and protecting your rights

In Australia, there are many laws and organisations that protect your rights. Several government agencies provide information about your rights and support to resolve any complaints and disputes. This can include dealings with other government agencies.

Your visa status does not limit the protection of your rights or your access to these ombudsman services.

5.2.1. Key Australia-wide agencies

- The [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission \(ACCC\)](#) provides information about consumer rights. It does not resolve individual complaints.
- The [Australian Human Rights Commission \(AHRC\)](#) investigates complaints about discrimination and human rights breaches, including race and gender discrimination.
- The [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) assists with complaints about private health insurance, VET student loans, immigration (including visa processing delays) and the Australian Federal Police.
- The [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) protects employee rights and investigates complaints.
- The [National Health Practitioner Ombudsman \(NHPO\)](#) independently oversees Australia's health practitioner regulation system by handling complaints and ensuring fair and lawful processes.

States and territories also have local consumer protection agencies that may assist with complaints about general consumer affairs, such as renting a home, buying a car, product safety and more.

- **Australian Capital Territory:** [Access Canberra](#)
- **New South Wales:** [NSW Fair Trading](#)
- **Northern Territory:** [NT Consumer Affairs](#)
- **Queensland:** [Office of Fair Trading Queensland](#); [Residential Tenancies Authority](#)
- **Tasmania:** [Tasmania Consumer, Building and Occupational Services \(CBOS\)](#)
- **South Australia:** [SA Office of Consumer and Business Services \(CBS\)](#)
- **Victoria:** [Consumer Affairs Victoria \(CAV\)](#)
- **Western Australia:** [WA Consumer Protection](#)

Other industries have specific regulators and ombudsmen responsible for protecting your rights and assisting with complaints. Topics can include education, financial services, energy and water, telecommunications, charities and more. Find out [where to go for consumer help](#).



5.3 Long-term settlement and citizenship

If you intend to stay in Australia long term, you can apply for permanent residency under the skilled, employer sponsored or family-based pathways.

There are various requirements for permanent residency, depending on the visa type. These may include meeting skills, experience, English language skills, health, age and character requirements. If permanent residency is granted, you will be allowed to live and work in Australia indefinitely. Find out more about [permanent residency](#).

After living in Australia for a certain period and meeting other requirements, you may be eligible to apply for citizenship. Find out more about [becoming an Australian citizen](#).

As an Australian citizen, you will have access to many of the same benefits as a permanent resident, such as access to Medicare and Centrelink services. Additional privileges and responsibilities include being eligible to apply for an Australian passport, vote in elections, serve on a jury, seek election to parliament [and more](#).



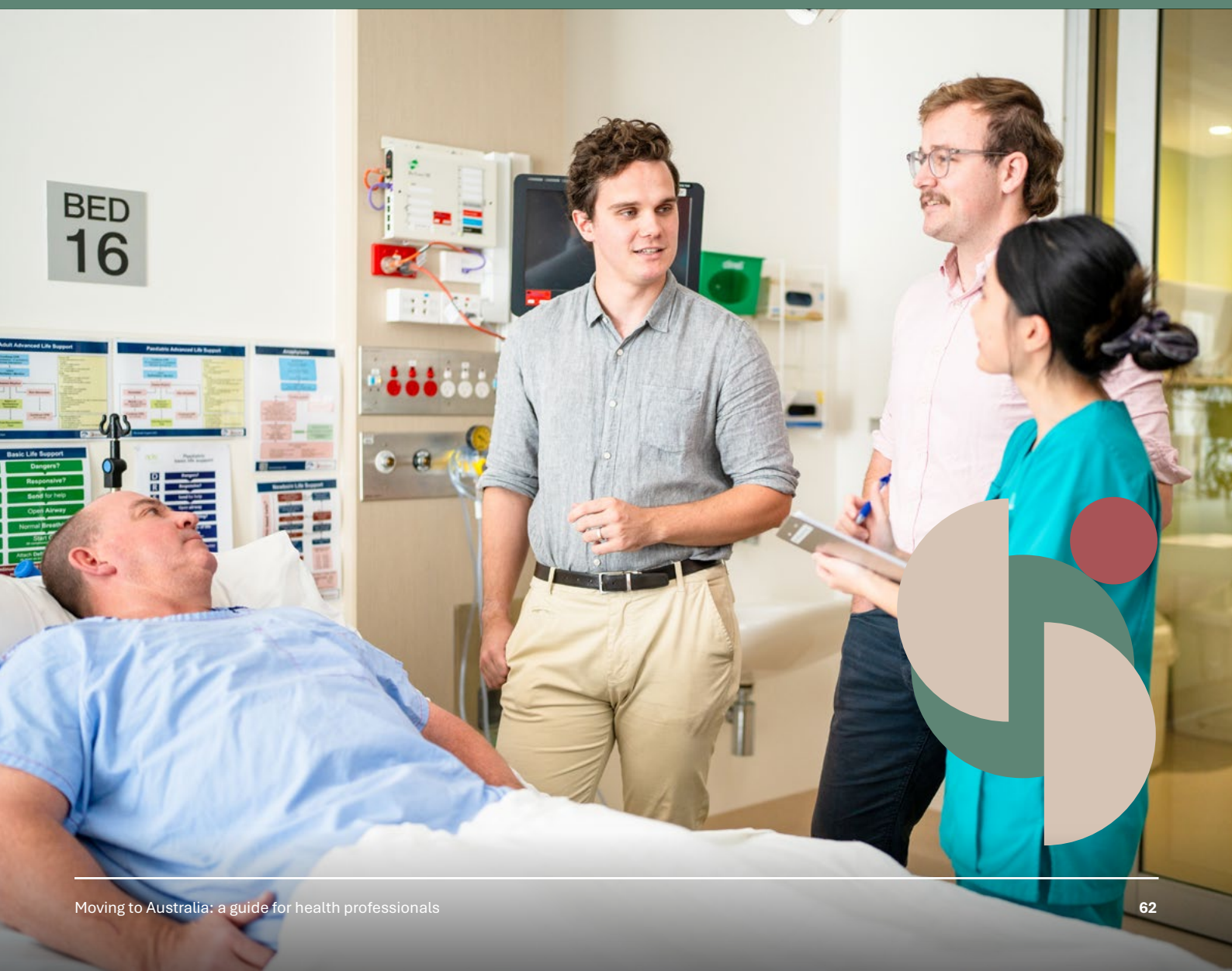
Emily
*Medical Practitioner,
Practising on the Central Coast, NSW*

Moving to Australia from the UK has been the most rewarding decision my husband and I ever made. We live a fantastic life by the beach with great work opportunities, and the perfect work-life balance. Our careers have grown and developed in our 6 years here in directions neither of us imagined, and now as citizens we look forward to a lifetime of sunshine, outdoor pursuits and much better coffee than the UK!



6

Appendix



6.1. Glossary of common Australian terms

6.1.1. Government and financial

Term	Meaning
ABN	Australian Business Number; a unique business identification number required for independent contractors, for example, health professionals working in private practice
ATO	<u>Australian Taxation Office</u> ; the Australian Government's principal tax collection agency
GST	<u>Goods and services tax</u> ; 10% tax on most goods and services sold or consumed in Australia
PAYG	<u>Pay As You Go instalments</u> ; an income tax withholding system
RBA	<u>Reserve Bank of Australia</u> ; Australia's central bank and banknote-issuing authority
Super	Superannuation; Australia's compulsory, long-term investment system for retirement saving
TFN	<u>Tax file number</u> ; your personal reference number in the tax and superannuation systems

6.1.2. Health

Term	Meaning
ACQSC	<u>Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission</u> ; the national regulator for funded aged care
ACSQHC	<u>Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care</u> ; an independent government agency that leads and coordinates national efforts to improve safety and quality in Australian healthcare
ADO/RDO	Additional Day Off/Rostered Day Off
Ahpra	<u>Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency</u> ; independent statutory body established by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (National Law) as enacted by each state and territory government. Ahpra works with the 15 National Boards to regulate 16 registered health professions, among other functions
AIR	<u>Australian Immunisation Register</u> ; Australia's national register that records vaccines given to all people in Australia
Allied health	There is no universal definition of allied health in Australia. Allied healthcare is provided by university qualified health professionals with specialised expertise in preventing, diagnosing and treating a range of conditions and illnesses. They can operate independently and often work in teams with various other health professionals to provide specialised support to patients
AoN	<u>Area of Need</u> ; a geographical location with a shortage of medical practitioners. State and territory governments determine their own AoN locations
Awards	Legal documents that outline minimum pay rates and conditions of employment in that specific industry and occupation
Bulk billing	When a health professional accepts the Medicare benefit available for a service as full payment for that service
EA	<u>Enterprise agreement</u> (or EBA, enterprise bargaining agreement); sets out the entitlements the employer agrees to provide to employees in their business or organisation

Term	Meaning
GP	General practitioner; a doctor who specialises in general practice. It is similar to roles such as ‘primary care physician’ or ‘family physician’ in some countries
IMG	International medical graduate
Medicare	Australia’s public health insurance scheme ; subsidises the cost of hospital and health services for Australians and eligible visitors.
Medicare benefits	The amount of government funding paid for a provided service
MPN	Medicare provider number; required for health professionals to claim under the Medicare Benefits Schedule and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme ; Australia’s national scheme for supporting people with permanent and significant disabilities
NHPO	National Health Practitioner Ombudsman ; an independent agency that oversees Australia’s health practitioner regulation system by handling complaints and ensuring fair and lawful processes
NRAS	National Registration and Accreditation Scheme ; Australia’s national system for regulating health practitioners
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme ; an Australian Government program that subsidises the cost of medicines for eligible people
PSR	Professional Services Review ; the national agency that investigates Medicare-referred cases of possible inappropriate practice relating to Medicare, Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)
TGA	Therapeutic Goods Administration ; national regulator for medicines, medical devices and other therapeutic goods
10-year moratorium	Australian Government legislation also known as section 19AB of the Health Insurance Act 1973 (Cth) . To access Medicare rebates, international medical graduates and foreign graduates of an accredited medical school must work in a priority area for at least 10 years. This time may also be reduced depending on the rurality of where you work, known as ‘scaling’

6.1.3. Media

Term	Meaning
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation; Australia’s principal public service broadcaster
NBN	National Broadband Network; Australia’s national wholesale broadband network
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service; Australian hybrid-funded public service broadcaster

6.2. Checklist for planning your move

Use this checklist to plan your move to Australia.

It provides estimated timeframes and activities involved in moving to Australia to work as an internationally qualified health professional. It is not a complete list and should be used as a guide only. The suggested timeframes may vary depending on personal circumstances and external factors such as changes to immigration policies, registration requirements or delays in any of the processes.

Refer to [Ahpra](#) (or the relevant National Board or professional association), the [Department of Home Affairs](#) and your employer for more information about the registration, visa and employment processes.

Planning your move to Australia	Tips
12–18 months before your move	
Create a list of possible places you would like to live in Australia.	Talk to friends and relatives already living in Australia and/or do some online research.
Check eligibility for professional registration and/or accreditation.	Visit the Ahpra website or the relevant professional association for your profession.
Research visa types and requirements for you and your family.	Refer to the Department of Home Affairs for visa information.
6–12 months before your move	
Begin your job search.	Refer to Job search and employment for tips and links to organisations with further information about tailoring your CV to the Australian job market.
Apply for professional registration and/or accreditation.	Refer to Health professional regulation in Australia.
Apply for your visa (if you are seeking an independent visa).	Refer to Migration and visa.
Secure employment.	Refer to Job search and employment.
3–6 months before your move	
Research relocation services.	Refer to Relocation support.
Develop a budget for when you move.	Refer to Relocation support.
Book flights to Australia.	
Prepare your current home for sale or rent, or organise an end to your lease if you are renting.	
Research child care and schooling in the area you will be living and working, and enrol your child(ren).	Refer to Child care and school system.
Organise shipping for any personal belongings that you cannot pack in your suitcase.	Shipping your belongings can take a long time. Plan ahead as some shipping companies book up quickly.

Planning your move to Australia	Tips
1–2 months before your move	
Organise temporary accommodation for when you arrive.	• Refer to Accommodation
Arrange for your mail to be redirected.	
Compile personal records and paperwork into a secure travel file.	
Organise private health insurance and any other required insurances.	• Private health insurance is compulsory for some visa types and is strongly recommended. Refer to Organising health insurance .
Apply for an Australian bank account.	• Refer to Personal finance .
Confirm relocation and arrival support from your employer.	
Request up-to-date immunisation records from your family doctor in your home country, including batch numbers.	• If you are moving with children and are eligible for child care subsidies, you will need to provide evidence of immunisation. Refer to Child care and school system .
Arrival to one month after your move	
Set up an Australian phone number.	• Refer to Setting up an Australian phone number
Register with Medicare if you are eligible.	• Refer to Medicare .
Activate your bank account.	• Refer to Personal finance .
Register for a tax file number with the Australian Taxation Office.	• Refer to Personal finance .
Transfer your driver's licence.	• Refer to Driving and public transport .
Fulfil any remaining requirements for employment, such as obtaining a working with children check (if needed) and getting any outstanding immunisations.	• Refer to Job search and employment .
If you are eligible for Medicare, register for the Australian Immunisation Register and have your family's immunisation records uploaded at a registered vaccination provider (e.g. a pharmacy).	• If you are moving with children and are eligible for child care subsidies, you will need to provide evidence of immunisation. Refer to Child care and school system .

