MONEY AND VALUABLES

Australia is generally regarded as a relatively safe place to live in comparison to many other countries but it is of course always advisable to take the normal precautions necessary for everyday life in any big city.

Valuables including cash, jewelry and electronic items should not be left unsecured in hotel rooms or unattended in public places. A passport is a valuable document that will be attractive to criminals who may try to take an identity to commit crimes. It should always be kept in a safe place. If a passport is lost or stolen then it should be reported as such to the Police and the relevant Embassy, High Commission or Consulate immediately. Lost or stolen credit cards, debit cards, driving licences and other cards or documents should also be reported as such immediately to the Police and relevant issuing authority.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS

In Australia, traffic drives **on the left-hand side of the road** and vehicles are right-hand drive. So it is very important when crossing a road to look to the right first, then left then right again! Wearing a seat belt is a legal requirement and fines for not wearing them are high. Speed limits are posted in kilometres per hour.

Speed limits are variable depending on the location and in some instances the time of day. This is especially so around school zones and school hours and so it is necessary to watch out for speed reduction signs.

SUN PROTECTION – VERY IMPORTANT IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian sun is very strong. It is advisable to always wear a shirt, hat, sunglasses and SPF 30+ sunscreen lotion, even on cloudy days to protect the skin. If spending the whole day outdoors, reapply sunscreen regularly. Stay out of the sun during the middle of the day when the sun is strongest. Advice given by authorities is to drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. One should be aware of the symptoms of heat-related illness, heat stroke etc.

WARNING SIGNS OF A HEAT STROKE

Signs can vary, but may include:

- Very high body temperature
- Red, hot, dry skin (no sweating)
- Dry swollen tongue
- Rapid pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness, confusion, nausea
- Collapse
- Eventual unconsciousness

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BEACH SAFETY

The beach is a great place to relax and meet friends. It is however a dynamic, ever-changing environment. Although it can be fun, it can also be unpredictable and dangerous to people who are unaware of the hazards. Most main beaches have lifeguards on patrol who understand the beach and the hazards. A system of flags and signs is used to advise beachgoers about the things they need to know to stay safe.

Perhaps the most important flags on the beach are the red and yellow flags. Always swim between these flags, they identify the supervised area of the beach and that while the flags are in-situ, a lifesaving service is operating.
If there are no red and yellow flags, you should not go swimming.

BUSHFIRES AND FIRES IN GENERAL

Australians live with the risk of bushfires. The bushfire 'season' runs from October through to April each year and during this period the risk of bushfire is at its greatest and so during this time observe some simple safety precautions.

Before setting out on a journey, inform yourself of bushfire risks through TV, radio and newspapers reports or the state bushfire website. When camping, use designated fireplaces and comply with road warning signs and total fire bans. If you must light a fire, always extinguish it completely with water **but be aware that during days on which a 'total fire ban' order applies, lighting any type of fire is illegal.** If planning a journey by road then be sure to check for fire alerts along the route and in the vicinity of it. It is easy to be trapped by fast-moving fires so checking before travel is a very sensible precaution to take.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Public transport is considered to be quite safe in Brisbane but nevertheless it is certainly not crime-free. Everyone should be as cautious and aware as they would be on any city transport system especially late at night.

CALL '000' IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

Police, Ambulance and Fire Services can all be called using '000' from any type of phone. Calling this number will put the caller through to an emergency operator who will divert the call the appropriate emergency service.

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