

Life in Melbourne



Carey

Baptist Grammar School



This guide is designed to support prospective international students and their families as they prepare for life at Carey and in Melbourne. It offers practical information and insights to help students feel confident, supported and well prepared for their transition.

About Carey

Carey Baptist Grammar School is situated in Kew, one of the inner eastern suburbs of Melbourne, only eight kilometres from the central business district (CBD). Beautiful views of the city skyline, including the one above, can be seen from a number of places around Carey's Kew campus.

Kew is a leafy, predominantly middle class suburb that is well serviced by public transport and includes several major shopping precincts.

Welcome to Melbourne

Melbourne is the capital city of the State of Victoria and is the second-largest city in Australia, with a population of over 5 million.

Melbourne is a welcoming and diverse city, home to people from many cultural backgrounds and a large international student community. It offers a vibrant lifestyle, strong education networks and a wide range of cultural, sporting and recreational opportunities.

Melbourne is renowned throughout Australia for the richness of its intellectual and cultural life and for its excellent food options, offering cuisines from around the world. The arts play a major role in the community. There are several prominent public art galleries and many small commercial art galleries, as well as an energetic and diverse range of theatre, music and arts festivals. Melbourne is also known for several major sporting events including the Melbourne Cup (horse racing), the Australian Formula One Grand Prix (motor racing), the Australian Open (tennis) and the AFL Grand Final (Australian Rules football).

Melbourne is also home to a number of internationally respected universities such as the University of Melbourne and Monash University.



Australian social etiquette and culture

Courtesy

'Good morning/afternoon', 'hello', 'g'day' and 'how are you?' are common greetings, even among strangers. It is usual for a person to say 'excuse me' to attract attention, join a conversation or be excused from a conversation or meal. It is considered impolite if you do not say 'please' when asking for something or 'thank you' when something is done for you or given to you.

Dress code

In Australia, people generally dress casually, particularly in warmer weather. Australian society values personal choice and comfort in dress, while also respecting appropriateness for different environments such as school, formal events and public spaces. Expectations may vary depending on the setting, and students will be advised in advance if more formal attire is required.

Names

Australian people often use first (given) names even with respected elders; however, if the person you are meeting for the first time is older than you are, use a title before their family name, for example: Mr Brown, Mrs Liu, Dr Smith or Professor Nguyen, until you are invited by that person to use their first name. Carey students always use their teachers' titles when speaking to them.

Opening of gifts

While in some cultures opening a gift/present in front of the person is considered rude, it is just the opposite in Australia. When accepting a gift, it is polite to open it immediately and express your appreciation.

Physical contact

In Australia, personal space and individual comfort are respected. Greetings commonly include a simple verbal greeting or a handshake, particularly in formal or unfamiliar settings.

Levels of physical contact can vary between individuals, families, and cultures. Students are encouraged to be mindful of personal boundaries and to respect what feels comfortable for themselves and others. At Carey, creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment is a priority, and students are supported in understanding appropriate interactions in both school and social settings.

Queues

People often form queues to buy food, to wait for a bank teller or to get on a bus. It is impolite and is not tolerated to push ahead of someone who is in a queue before you. Australians also value their personal space and privacy so it is a good idea not to stand too close to another person when queuing.

Rubbish

Place rubbish in rubbish bins. If there are no rubbish bins you should carry the rubbish until you find a bin to put it in. You can be fined for throwing rubbish on the ground or leaving it behind in public places. You often also find recycling bins near a general rubbish bin. Use these to dispose of paper, glass and recyclable plastic products.

Smoking

Carey is a strictly non-smoking environment, which means that no-one is permitted to smoke anywhere on school property. Smoking at school is considered a serious misdemeanour and students will be suspended from school for doing so. Under Victorian law, it is illegal to buy or provide cigarettes for anyone under the age of 18.

In the public domain, smoking is prohibited almost everywhere indoors and you can be fined for doing so. Smoking is also prohibited in some outdoor places such as train stations, bus shelters and restaurants.

Spitting

It is considered extremely impolite to spit in the street or to make loud throat and nose clearing noises.

Alcohol

The legal age for buying alcohol in Australia is 18. For adults, alcohol is commonly served at social events, including some in the workplace. Saying no to an offer of an alcoholic drink will not offend your host, just politely decline and ask for a soft drink (non-alcoholic drink).

There are many laws concerning supplying alcohol to people under 18 years of age in Australia, including providing alcohol to minors in private homes. Illegally providing alcohol to those under 18 is taken very seriously by the Police. Carey is committed to ensuring that it meets its obligations in relation to alcohol provision, and has appropriate processes and systems in place to assist with this. For current laws and information about alcohol and minors visit vgccc.vic.gov.au and go to Community › Young People.

Communications

Australia offers a wide range of mobile and internet service providers, allowing students to choose plans that suit their communication and study needs. Most students rely on mobile phones for daily communication, including calls, messaging and internet access.

Internet access

Internet access is widely available across Australia. Most homes, including homestay accommodation, have reliable internet connections suitable for study and everyday use. Free wi-fi is available in many public spaces such as libraries, shopping centres and cafés, though availability and speed may vary.

Mobile phone plans typically include data for internet access, which many students use when away from home. Internet services and data speeds depend on the provider, plan and location.

Mobile phones

Mobile plans are available as prepaid or monthly options, with many plans including generous data allowances, unlimited local calls and access to messaging apps. Students and families can arrange an appropriate mobile plan soon after arrival to support communication with home, homestay families and the School.

The major telecommunications providers in Australia include Telstra and Optus, along with a range of other providers offering flexible and competitive plans.

Calling interstate

Australia has four different area codes for landline phone numbers. If you are making a call to a different zone, you need to include the area code before the number. The area codes are:

- Victoria and Tasmania (including Melbourne and Hobart): 03
- New South Wales and the ACT (including Sydney and Canberra): 02
- Queensland (including Brisbane): 07
- South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia (including Perth, Adelaide and Darwin): 08

Driving

Driving in Australia

If you hold an overseas driver's licence and want to drive a vehicle in Victoria, you can do so for six months if you have a permanent visa – recorded from the date you first entered Australia if the permanent visa was issued before you entered, or from the date the permanent visa was issued if that was while you were in Australia. If you hold a temporary visa you can drive using your current overseas driver licence for the length of your stay.

Anyone driving in Australia must carry their licence with them at all times while driving, as well as an official English translation if the overseas licence is not written in English.

You must be at least 18 years of age to obtain a Victorian probationary driver's licence or if you have held an overseas driver's licence for less than three years. You must be at least 16 years of age to obtain a Victorian learner's permit (at least 18 years for a motorcycle).

Road rules and regulations about licences vary slightly from state to state, but for more information about driver's licences, permits or road rules in Victoria go to vicroads.vic.gov.au

Important driving laws

In Victoria, it is illegal for fully-licensed drivers to drive with a blood alcohol content of 0.05% or over. Police conduct random alcohol and drug tests of drivers regularly. Penalties are immediate and serious. If you are driving on a probationary licence or learner's permit, you are required by law to have zero (0.00%) blood alcohol content.

Australian law also requires that all passengers and drivers of cars wear properly fitted seat belts or restraints (car seats etc. for children and babies). These rules are strictly enforced and penalties apply.

There are a number of laws unique to Melbourne regarding drivers and trams. Most importantly, you must stop behind a tram when it is letting passengers on or off until it starts moving again. You can read about the road laws on the VicRoads website mentioned above.

There are also intersections in the Melbourne CBD (central business district) where you will be required to do a 'hook turn' (turning right from the far left lane). Hook turns often confuse visitors to Melbourne and can be dangerous if you turn too early, so it's important to know how to do a hook turn properly. For instructions see the VicRoads website.

Electrical/power points

Australia operates on 240/250 volts at 50Hz.

Adaptors and can be purchased at most supermarkets, pharmacies and specialist travel and hardware shops.

Points on plugs are in this configuration:



Emergencies

The emergency number for the fire brigade, police or ambulance is 000.

This is a free call and a 24-hour service.

Remember to state the service you require and give your location. You can make emergency calls from all pay phones and mobile phones, even if you don't have any money or credit available.

The international standard mobile emergency number 112 will also connect you to the emergency services in Australia, but only from mobile phones. This number will work on your mobile even if you do not have credit or a SIM card in your phone. You can always call the School on the 24-hour contact number displayed on your Student Safety Card if you feel like you are in danger or require immediate assistance.

Health care

Ambulance Services

If someone requires emergency medical treatment and you need an ambulance, dial 000. In Australia, ambulance services are not free. The patient will eventually be charged for the ambulance service unless they have ambulance cover through their health insurance or Ambulance Victoria. Most health insurance automatically covers ambulance services, but it is important to check your coverage. Membership can be organised online at ambulance.vic.gov.au

Medicare

Medicare is an Australian Government funded health care scheme that allows Australians to claim back the cost of some of their medical and pharmaceutical expenses. More information about Medicare is available at humanservices.gov.au with translation into many different languages.



Health Insurance

Students who enter Australia on a student visa 500 must be covered by an overseas health provider (OSHC). For students who don't have OSHC, Carey can arrange this for the duration of the students visa. Carey's preferred provider is BUPA (see bupa.com.au). This is at the cost of the student and is paid prior to commencement at school. Students may claim some of their medical expenses at their local health insurance provider office or online. For more information, contact the Admissions department at Carey on (03) 9816 1242 or admissions@carey.com.au

Illness and hospitals

In an event that you become unwell, please see your local General Practitioner doctor for treatment in the first instance. For more serious illnesses, you can be treated in a hospital Emergency Department no matter whether you have insurance or not. However, if you don't have insurance your visit could be costly. Please note that not all hospitals have Emergency Departments.

Some of the largest 24-Hour Emergency Departments near Kew are:

- The Royal Melbourne Hospital, Grattan Street Parkville
- The Alfred Hospital, Commercial Road Prahran
- St Vincent's Hospital, 41 Victoria Parade Fitzroy
- The Austin Hospital, 145 Studley Road Heidelberg

Money and Banking

Australia has a decimal system with 100 cents to the dollar (AUD\$). Coins have values of 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents, and AUD\$1 and AUD\$2; notes have values of AUD\$5, AUD\$10, AUD\$20, AUD\$50 and AUD\$100. Prices are rounded up or rounded down to the nearest five cents of the total bill when you pay by cash.

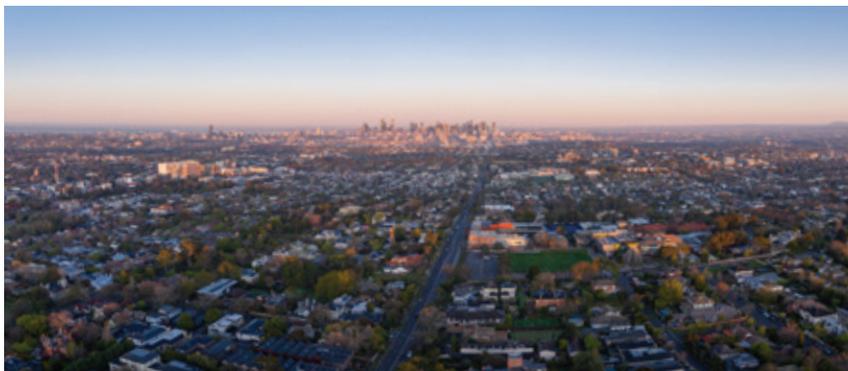
Melbourne's banking hours are generally Monday to Thursday 9.00am–4.00pm and Friday 9.00am–5.00pm. Some banks in major shopping centres are also open on Saturdays, but check before you go. All major banks are equipped to exchange foreign currency, but depending on the currency and the size of the bank branch, it may need to be arranged in advance. Several international banks have branches in Melbourne. Major credit cards – Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Bankcard, Diners Club and their affiliates – are widely accepted throughout Victoria. Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are found in many convenient locations like banks, along main shopping streets and in malls and allow you to withdraw money at any time, day or night. You will need to check with your bank to confirm which kinds of ATM you can use without being charged fees.

For your safety, you should use caution when accessing funds at night or in isolated locations. Always protect your Personal Identification Number (PIN) when using an ATM.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Australia has a Goods and Services Tax (GST) of 10% on most goods and services. Marked prices on goods in shops include the GST and details of the amount that has been charged as GST must always be shown on an invoice. Visitors to Australia may be eligible for a Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) on certain purchases when departing the country, subject to eligibility requirements.





Tipping

Tipping in Australia is optional and not expected in most situations. Service staff are generally paid a wage, and the listed price is usually the final amount to be paid. In some settings, such as restaurants or service-based industries, people may choose to leave a tip to show appreciation for excellent service, but this is entirely a personal choice.

Students should feel comfortable paying the listed price without any obligation to tip.

Newspapers

Melbourne offers a wide range of local, national, and international news sources. Most students and families access news through online and digital platforms, including websites and mobile apps.

Major Australian newspapers provide digital editions, and some content may require a subscription. Printed newspapers are still available at selected retailers, and newspapers in other languages can be found at some larger news agencies.

Students are encouraged to access news and information in ways that best suit their interests, language preferences and daily routines.

Postage and mail

At a Post Office you can post letters, send faxes, transfer money overseas, and buy a variety of postage and packaging products and basic stationery. Opening hours are generally Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 5.00pm. Some Post Offices in major centres are also open on Saturday mornings. Australia Post delivers Monday to Friday.

Public transport

Melbourne has an extensive and well-connected public transport network, including trains, trams and buses, which makes it easy for students to travel around the city and surrounding suburbs. Trams operate throughout the central city, trains connect the wider metropolitan area and buses provide local services in suburban areas.

Public transport in Victoria is integrated under Public Transport Victoria (PTV), allowing students to travel across different transport modes using a single ticketing system. Most students access timetables, maps and real-time updates through mobile apps and online platforms.

Helpful transport apps, such as the PTV app and Tram Tracker, provide up-to-date information and assist students in planning their journeys confidently. An express airport shuttle service also runs regularly between Melbourne Airport and the CBD. Students and families are encouraged to check official transport websites or apps for current routes, schedules and fares.

When do the trains, trams and buses run?

Public transport services in Melbourne operate throughout the day and evening, with trains, trams and buses running regularly across the city and suburbs. Extended services are available on weekends, with overnight options on selected routes. Service times can vary depending on the day, route and location. Students are encouraged to use official transport apps and online platforms to check real-time timetables and plan journeys confidently.

Carey supports students in becoming familiar with public transport routines as they settle into school and daily life in Melbourne.

How does public transport ticketing work?

Public transport in Melbourne uses an electronic ticketing system called myki. Students can use either a physical myki card or a mobile myki through a compatible smartphone.

In Victoria, children and young people under the age of 18 may be eligible for free travel or concession arrangements under Victorian Government initiatives, subject to conditions and time periods. As eligibility and entitlements can change, families are encouraged to check the most up-to-date information through official public transport channels.

myki cards can be purchased and topped up at train stations, selected tram and bus stops and retail outlets across Melbourne. Many students manage their travel through official transport apps and online services for

convenience. For current ticketing options, eligibility requirements and travel conditions, students and families should refer to official Public Transport Victoria information.

How much does public transport cost?

myki is Melbourne's electronic ticketing system and automatically calculates the most appropriate fare based on a student's travel. Students can use pre-paid or time-based travel options, depending on their travel needs.

Some students may be eligible for free travel or concession arrangements, including those under the age of 18, subject to Victorian Government conditions. As eligibility and travel rules can change, families are encouraged to check current arrangements through official public transport channels.

myki balances, travel history and ticket options can be viewed and updated through official transport apps or online platforms.

Travel zones

Melbourne is divided into two public transport zones. Zone 1 covers the CBD and suburbs within about 25km of the CBD. Zone 2 is for outer suburbs. Your myki will automatically be charged appropriately for the zones in which you travelled. Maps showing each zone's boundaries are on display at all train stations, tram stops and on all trains, trams and buses.

Always remember to touch on and off at a myki reader every time you use public transport.

How do I get to Carey on public transport?

Carey is in Zone 1. Auburn Railway Station is well within walking distance to Carey. It is on the Belgrave and Lilydale train lines, but be aware that many express trains do not stop at Auburn Station. There are three tram lines within short walking distance: Route 72 travels along Burke Road, Route 16 travels along Glenferrie Road and Route 109 travels along Cotham/Whitehorse Road. The 624 bus service stops right outside the School and runs between Kew and Oakleigh and the 548 bus from Ivanhoe Station stops nearby on Cotham Road.

What if I don't have a ticket or forget to swipe when I board?

If you are caught travelling on public transport without a validated ticket, you will be fined. If you are in doubt, ask for advice about what ticket to buy and how to validate it for your trip. On a bus and at the train station, you swipe your myki card on entry and exit. On a tram, you touch on as you enter, but do not need to touch off on exit, unless your journey is entirely within Zone 2.

Can I buy a concession ticket?

Concession and free travel eligibility on Melbourne's public transport system depends on age, visa status and current Victorian Government policies.

International students are generally required to travel using full-fare tickets unless they are eligible for specific free travel or concession arrangements, such as those that may apply to children and young people under the age of 18. Eligibility conditions and entitlements can change, and families are encouraged to check the most up-to-date information through official public transport channels.

Using a concession ticket without valid entitlement may result in a fine. Students are encouraged to ensure they are travelling with the correct ticket type and to seek advice or check official transport apps if unsure.

For students who are eligible for concessions, longer-term travel options may be available. Details regarding eligibility and ticket types can be found through Public Transport Victoria.

Safety

Melbourne is a relatively safe city but you should take precautions to ensure your own safety, just as you would in your own home city.

- Whenever you can, travel with at least one other person. If you are travelling alone after dark, consider travelling by taxi or have someone meet you so you don't have to walk alone.
- Be alert at all times. If you feel uncomfortable in any situation, find a way to leave safely. Seek out the nearest safe public place such as a restaurant or café, or find the nearest security guard/police officer.
- Plan your trips carefully and tell someone when you expect to return home, especially if you are travelling to unfamiliar places or after dark.
- Stay in areas that are well lit, especially when waiting for public transport. At train stations, there is always a marked safety zone with an emergency call button.
- If you travel at night on a train, sit in the first carriage and sit by the emergency call button; on trams and buses, sit close to the driver.
- At night, always stay in well lit streets and busy areas as much as possible.
- Keep your mobile phone close. Always carry coins or a phone card so you can use a pay phone if your mobile runs out of battery or loses service. Memorise a few phone numbers (a relative or Local Support Person)

in case your mobile is lost/stolen. Remember that 000 is the free emergency number for Police, Fire and Ambulance services.

- Keep handbags, purses or wallets on or close to your body.
- Do not carry your valuable possessions such as iPads or laptops so that they are visible. Make sure that your valuable possessions are insured or, whenever you can, leave them at home.
- Be aware of who is around you. Be as quick as you can at ATMs/ticket machines and make sure no one can see you entering your PIN.

Swimming and Beaches

Melbourne is excellent for water-lovers. There is the choice of the relatively protected waters of Port Phillip Bay and Westernport Bay or the many surf beaches of Bass Strait.

Though at times these waters may seem sedate and user-friendly for just about anyone, the potential for disaster is ever present and swimmers/surfers need to be aware of the dangers. The golden rule for anyone going to any surf beach is to attend a patrolled beach and only enter the water between the yellow and red patrol flags. These flags mean trained surf lifesavers are monitoring the swimming area. Surf Life Saving Victoria is a community organisation and does not operate these patrols all year, only in warmer months. If you must enter the water at any time outside this season, make sure you have someone with you who is not swimming and can raise the alarm in the event you get into difficulty.

Most importantly, know your own ability in any type of water. Victorian beaches are beautiful but are also some of the most dangerous. Being able to easily swim laps in a swimming pool does not mean you will be able to swim against a strong swell or other hidden dangers such as rips (rips are very strong currents under the surface of the water that are very difficult to spot. They can occur even at beaches that seem to be quite calm). Many Australian rivers also have strong currents running underneath the surface



of the water. Objects such as fallen trees under the water can also make swimming very unsafe. Often language barriers contribute to a lack of understanding which can lead to people drowning. Always think 'safety first' around water.

Most Australian children learn to swim from quite a young age, so you might find that your children are invited to social events at the beach or swimming pools. If you or your children are not strong swimmers, you might consider professional swimming lessons. Your local council will be able to provide details of your nearest pool that offers lessons for children and adults. If your child can not swim very well, it might be helpful to make sure that the Local Support Person knows this.

To find your nearest surf lifesaving patrolled swimming beach or for more information about water safety go to lifesavingvictoria.com.au

To learn more about rip currents go to ripcurrents.com.au

Remember to swim between the flags at the beach!

Taxis

Taxis are widely available throughout Melbourne and provide a convenient travel option, particularly in the evening or when public transport is less frequent. Licensed taxis are clearly marked, drivers display identification and fare meters are used for trips.



In addition to taxis, many students commonly use ride-share services through mobile apps. These services offer convenient booking and cashless payment options and are widely used for everyday travel in Melbourne.

Fares for taxis and ride-share services can vary depending on time of travel, distance and traffic conditions, and additional charges may apply in some circumstances. Students are encouraged to check fare details through official apps or booking platforms before travelling.

Carey encourages students to use reputable transport services and to prioritise personal safety when travelling, particularly at night. Homestay families and school staff are available to provide guidance on safe travel options if needed.

Time zones

Time zones in Australia

Australia has three time zones:

- Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) is GMT +10 hours and covers the eastern states of Queensland, New South Wales (with the exception of the town of Broken Hill), Victoria, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.
- Australian Central Standard Time (ACST) is GMT +9.5 hours and covers the state of South Australia, the town of Broken Hill in western New South Wales and the Northern Territory.
- Australian Western Standard Time (AWST) is GMT +8 hours and covers Western Australia.

Daylight Saving Time (AEDT)

In Victoria, Daylight Saving runs from the first Sunday in October to the first Sunday in April. Clocks are moved forward one hour in October to allow the daylight to last longer into the evening and back again in April.

Daylight saving time changes are well advertised in the mainstream media.

- Normal time in Victoria (AEST) is GMT +10.00
- Victorian Daylight Saving time (AEDT) is GMT +11.00

Not all states in Australia change their clocks for summer. You can check Australian timezones at australia.gov.au by going to About Australia › Facts and Figures.

Weather

Melbourne's weather can be very hard to predict and it is not unusual for the temperature to change dramatically over the course of a single day.

Melbourne weather during the year

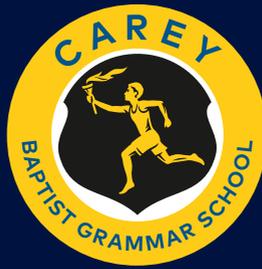
Season	Months	Average Minimum	Average Maximum
Autumn mild, can be windy	March, April, May	11°C	20°C
Winter often cold and wet	June, July, August	6°C (below 0°C in some outer areas)	14°C
Spring mild, and wet, but can be windy	September, October, November	10°C	20°C
Summer hot	December, January, February	14°C	26°C but can be as high as 40°C

The UV danger in Australia is very high. The Cancer Council of Australia suggest that when you go outside you should always wear clothing that shields your skin from the sun as much as practical; wear a broad spectrum Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30+ (or higher) sunscreen, and reapply it every two hours; wear a wide-brimmed hat; stay in the shade as much as possible; and wear UV protection sunglasses.

Daily weather information

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) provides detailed weather forecasts and updates for all areas of Australia online. The BOM also has an app available that will enable you to access this information on your phone. Hourly weather updates and weather warnings for Melbourne can be found at bom.gov.au





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