

Smart

smarthandbook

VICTORIA



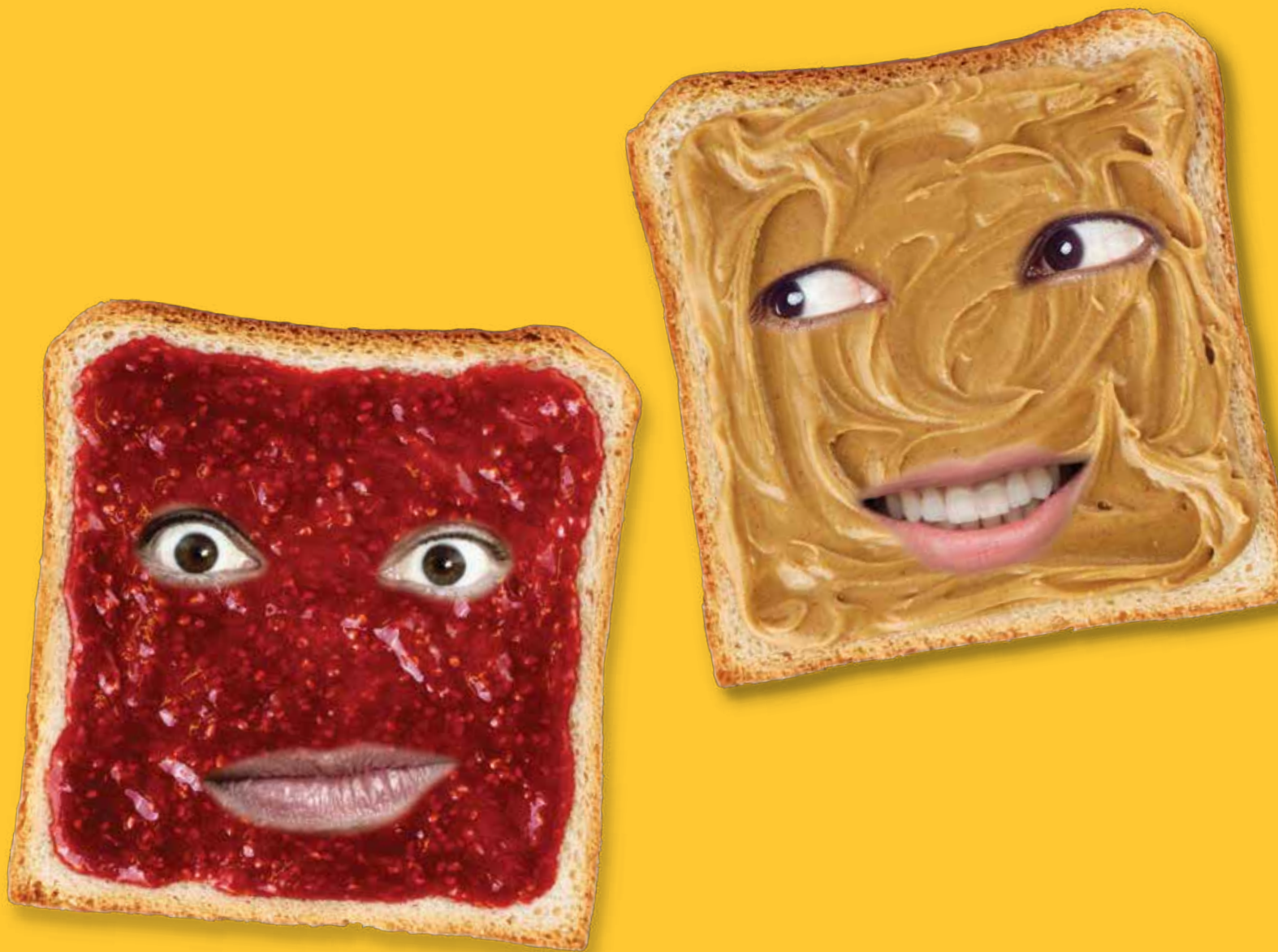
FOR

AND OTHER STUFF



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Working together

Victorian Police have been working alongside the community for many years and in various ways. PCYCs are excellent examples of how local police and community work together to provide access and opportunities for our youth.

Today, PCYCs remain a very worthwhile community-based proactive initiative. Local communities continue to be involved in the establishment of these viable and long-term community resources that provide recreation and entertainment for youth, specifically those at risk of anti-social behaviour and those who are disadvantaged.

The Victoria Police Youth Affairs Office supports and gives advice to the PCYCs, however, Victorian PCYCs are all run independently by Management Committees. These committees are made up of local police, community members and local youth.

The Mission of PCYCs is **'Developing our future through helping young people'**. With this in mind, PCYCs have the following aims:

- To have shared respect between police, community and young people
- To reduce the incidence of young people becoming offenders or victims of crime
- To develop young people's self-esteem, confidence, social and leadership skills
- To provide opportunities for challenge and excitement through law abiding behaviour
- To encourage the principles of good citizenship

To remain relevant in the community, PCYCs offer a substantially different form of activities and programs that fill a need within the fitness, recreational and social market. PCYCs aim to provide a wide range of sporting activities designed to promote good citizenship within

local communities generally and for the disadvantaged and youth at risk. PCYCs provide a safe meeting place for local youth to participate in a number of activities such as craft, video nights, billiards, computer/homework sessions, boxing, basketball, day trips, gym work, self-defence etc. These clubs exist in suburbs of Melbourne and also in country areas.

PCYCs continue to be viable and relevant community resources and we trust that you will find this handbook to be a handy resource as well. Under the skill and guidance from our publishers, Countrywide Austral, and the generous assistance provided through businesses and supporters, we believe we have produced a vital resource that will assist youth in dealing with a wide range of life skills and issues.

Thank you for assisting Victorian PCYCs with this project and we urge you to support those who have got behind us to make this possible.

For locations of Victorian PCYCs visit our link site at: www.police.vic.gov.au



A special thank you to our valued Patrons of the Streetsmart Handbook



Deputy Commissioner Lesa Gale

AFP Deputy Commissioner
International and Specialist Capabilities

As the Australian Federal Police Deputy Commissioner, it's my job to highlight to you the importance of protecting yourself and where to get help if something goes wrong both in the online and real world.

I recommend to you the Streetsmart Handbook which does just that. It contains answers to your many questions about being part of a safe, healthy and connected community. It will point you in the right direction of how to access government and other services that can provide advice and support and empower you through your teenage years into adulthood.

As you choose your own path – keep this book nearby so you are informed with all the important tools you will need at your fingertips. The decisions you make now will impact you for the rest of your life. We all make mistakes – it's how we recover from those mistakes that's important. The Streetsmart Handbook will help you make fewer mistakes and guide you through how you recover from the mistakes you do make.

Issues like cyberbullying, image-based abuse, or sextortion can happen to people of all age groups, and it can happen to you. The Streetsmart Handbook can help with what to do if this happens to you. We know technology and the internet are an important part of our everyday lives. Whether you are using technology as part of your studies or on a social basis, being digitally Streetsmart means you will know what to do to stay safe online.

This Streetsmart Handbook has been developed to guide you over the coming years and contains information to answer some of your questions and to point you toward sources of additional support as you seek to maintain a healthy mind, body and relationships.

Good luck! I wish you all the very best.



Liana Buchanan

Principal Commissioner for Children
and Young People (Victoria)

Moving into adulthood is an exciting time. It is filled with new opportunities, adventures and freedoms, waiting to be explored and discovered. But it can be a scary time too. Suddenly you are faced with a whole new range of decisions and responsibilities that you have never had to deal with before.

Some of the best lessons I've learnt in my life have come from making mistakes and learning from my experiences. But there have also been times where I've been grateful to get some really helpful advice that has stopped me from making mistakes in the first place.

The Streetsmart Handbook is a collection of all the snippets of information and advice you need when you're entering the adult world, in a single compact book.

Whether you are moving out of home, trying to get a driver's licence, deciding on a career or wanting some health and wellbeing tips; this book has got it covered. It will give you practical tools to negotiate with a dodgy landlord, help you avoid creeps on the internet, buy your first car and set a sensible budget. It will also save you a lot of Googling.

I hope this handbook helps you face the good, bad and boring parts of adulthood with confidence and calm. Getting the basics right will help free up more time and energy on what is most important: enjoying and making the most of this exciting time.



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touch it,
report it.**



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You need to understand the real danger of **unexploded ordnance (UXO)**. If you touch UXO - like an old bomb, bullet or hand grenade - it could seriously injure or even kill you. You must know - Don't Touch It!

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www.defence.gov.au/uxo



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is a small, family-run, NDIS registered provider dedicated to offering personalised support to NDIS participants aged 7-65 years. Operating for over two years, we proudly serve the Geelong, Bellarine Peninsula, and Surf Coast regions.

Why Choose Full Spectrum Solutions?

Personalized, Family-Run Service

Unlike larger companies, we provide a personal touch to our services. As a small business, we can offer tailored, person-centred support that truly meets your needs.

Experienced Leadership

Our directors, Tez and Nick, bring over 10 years of experience in various health industry roles, including disability, mental health, aged care, TAC, and NDIS fields. Their passion for providing a comprehensive range of supports ensures that you receive the best care possible.

Qualified and Compliant Staff

We ensure all our staff have the necessary NDIS checks, qualifications, and experience. Beyond mandatory NDIS compliance checks, our team undergoes additional training in areas such as:

- Trauma-informed care
- Medication management
- Positive Behaviour Support Training (PBS)
- Epilepsy training
- And more!

Our Services

We offer a variety of NDIS funded supports, including:

- In-home supports: Assistance with daily living activities in the comfort of your home.
- Support Independent Living (SIL): Helping you live independently while receiving the support you need.
- Community Access: Facilitating your engagement with the community and participation in social activities.
- Peer Mentoring: Guidance and support from someone with lived experience.
- Short-Term Accommodation (STA) Respite: Temporary care to give you and your caregivers a break.
- And more!



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past, present and emerging.

Disclaimer

This publication contains images of Indigenous people that have been sourced/purchased from image galleries. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that these may include images of deceased persons.

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Your Life Admin



Knowing what information you can access, influence and control will help you make responsible, well-informed decisions while becoming better organised for the future.



Your health, your records

Accessing your health records

myGov is a secure way to access government services online with one login and one password.

A myGov account provides secure access to a range of government services using one username and password.

You will need a myGov account for Centrelink payments, Medicare claims, lodging a tax return with the Australian Taxation Office, looking for a job, accessing your health records, the National Disability Insurance Scheme or wanting to make a Victorian Housing Register Application.

To create a myGov account:

1. Go to **my.gov.au** and select **Create an account**
2. Enter your email address and accept the terms of use if you agree
3. Enter your confirmation code
4. Choose a password and three secret questions
5. Get your username by email
6. Sign in to your myGov account and follow the steps to link to other services



Your own Medicare card

You can transfer from your parents' Medicare card to your own Medicare card once you turn 15 years old.

Apply online at <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/ms011>.

Once your application is confirmed, you can access and view your information by linking your Medicare account to your myGov account.

Your health records

Once you turn 14, you can manage your own health information via the government's My Health Record system, which is an online summary of your key health information.

When you have a My Health Record, your health information can be viewed securely online, from anywhere, at any time – even if you move or travel interstate.

You can access your health information from any computer or device that is connected to the internet.

Your parent or legal guardian will no longer automatically have access to your health records, but you can invite them to be your nominated representative.

To manage your My Health Record, you will need:

1. A myGov account
2. Your Medicare number, name, address, date of birth and gender. You may also be asked questions such as the date of your last doctor's visit to ensure it is you!
3. To link your My Health Record to your myGov account, and set it up.

Find out more about My Health Record at www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/for-teens

Health insurance

You can remain on your parents' family health insurance policy until at least 25 years old (sometimes 30!) if you are still studying full-time, not working full-time and are not married.

If your circumstances change that do result in not being fully dependent on your parents, you may need to come off their policy earlier.

Check with your parents' health insurer for details, as all policies differ slightly, to ensure you are well covered in case of an accident!



Organ and blood donation

Australian Organ Donor Register

You can join the Australian Organ Donor Register to enter your organ and tissue after death donation decision from the age of 16 years.

You don't have to be on it, but it's the best way to make your decision clear if you want to donate organs and which organs or tissue you want to give.

It's important to put your decision on the register even if you've put it elsewhere, like on your driver's licence. The register only covers donations for transplants – not those for research.

Remember too ... tell your family your decision about being an organ donor. They'll have the final say.

When you die, they need to agree before your organs can be donated. They're more likely to follow your wishes if they already know about them.

To register or to find out more about organ donation please visit www.donatelife.gov.au



Blood donation
You need to be over the age of 18 to donate blood. If you have already turned 18 and want to find out more about donating visit lifeblood.com.au and take the eligibility text.

Zaidee's story

Zaidee Rose Alexander Turner, aged 7 years and 22 days, died suddenly on 2nd December 2004 from a burst blood vessel in her brain called a Cerebral Aneurysm.

Zaidee's parents, Kim and Allan, founded Zaidee's Rainbow Foundation not long after.

At the time of Zaidee's death, the Turner family had been registered organ and tissue donors for five years.

As a result Zaidee donated her organs and tissues at the Royal Children's Hospital, as were her wishes at the time.

From this gift, the lives of seven people (six children and one adult) were improved and, in some cases, saved.

Zaidee was the only child in Victoria under the age of 16 years and we have been told one of the youngest Australians to donate her organs and tissues in 2004. She was only one of six children nationally to donate their organs.

Zaidee's story is directed towards both children and adults so they can think about others who are waiting for a life-saving operation and a suitable match for an organ or tissue.

Think about giving this gift to others so they can live a better life and in some cases, have a second chance at life.

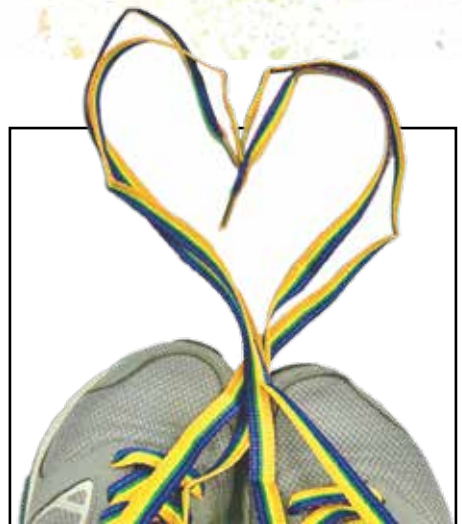
Zaidee's gift of her organs to others will allow them to have another birthday.

One in five people on the transplant waiting list will never get the chance to have another birthday if people do not become registered donors.

The symbol is representative of hope; after every storm the sun shines and there is a rainbow. For those people on the transplant waiting list, the rainbow symbol offers them hope.

At the end of their rainbow is an organ or tissue to improve their life – or in most cases – save their life.

Allan Turner
CEO Zaidee's Rainbow Foundation and Zaidee's dad



What you can do if you are under 16 years old

Discuss organ and tissue donation with your parents and express your thoughts and wishes about what you would like to happen if your life was cut short.

Ask your school to arrange for Zaidee's Rainbow Foundation to come out and speak with your class.

Purchase Zaidee laces online at www.zaidee.org/zaidees-shop

For more information please visit www.zaidee.org

Find out more about Zaidee's Rainbow Foundation and how you can donate to this important charity or participate in an event to raise funds for organ donor awareness and education by visiting www.zaidee.org

zaidee's
rainbow foundation



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Money matters

Being a full-time secondary student means you are eligible for discounts, concessions and maybe even some financial help (eligibility criteria applies).

This chapter also provides tips for budgeting, and saving for big-ticket items.

It saves to be a student

Full-time students are entitled to discounts and concessions on a range of things including:

- public transport
- airfares
- books
- computers and software
- car registration
- medical and dental costs
- tickets to movies and events
- club memberships

Most places that offer student discounts or concessions will just need to see your student card from your school. Make sure you always have it with you.

For other discounts you may need to buy or apply for a specific discount card.

If you are not sure if a student discount is available, just ask – the worst they can do is say no.

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Health Care Card

A Health Care Card will give you concessions including discounts on household bills, medical expenses, study costs, motor vehicle registration and public transport.

Examples:

- **Prescription medicine** – Bring your Health Care Card to the chemist when buying prescription medicines for a discounted price
- **Dental treatment** – Bring your Health Care Card to the dentist for free or discounted dental care (depending on what you're getting done) through public dental clinics in community health centres, rural hospitals and the Royal Dental Hospital in Melbourne
- **Ambulance travel** – Health Care Card holders get free ambulance and air ambulance travel anywhere in Australia in an emergency or on the recommendation of a doctor
- **Eye care and glasses** – Free eye examinations and low-cost glasses are available for Health Care Card holders in Victoria (and their dependants under the age of 16 if they are listed on the concession card)
- **Optometry and eye care service** – The Victorian College of Optometry provides low-cost eye care for people with Health Care Cards
- **Hearing services** – A wide range of free and discounted hearing services are available to Health Care Card holders, including hearing tests and hearing aids

Concessions can change over time. Sometimes the amount of discount can change, and sometimes a concession can stop being offered altogether.

It is a good idea to make sure you double-check that a concession is currently available before you assume that you'll get it.

Visit www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/low-income-health-care-card to keep up-to-date.

Health Care Card holders in Victoria are eligible for discounts and concession rates on TAFE and training enrolment. To find out more about these discounts, check out the TAFE enrolment fees concession page on the Department of Human Services website.

TAFEs may also offer concessions on enrolment fees to partners of people who have Health Care Cards, if they are dependent on the cardholder for their income. Talk to your student administration office to find out more about this.



Other concession cards

Some organisations offer student discount cards that you can buy in return for discounts at businesses that they have a sponsorship arrangement with. A quick search for 'student concession cards' should turn some up.

Before you buy one of these cards, though, you should do some research. Ask around to see if any of your friends or family have bought a card like it, and whether they thought it was worth the money.

You could also get in touch with Consumer Affairs Victoria to see if they have any advice about a student concession card you are considering buying on 1300 55 81 81 or email consumer@justice.vic.gov.au



Financial assistance

If you are aged 15-24 years old, you may be eligible for Centrelink payments and services while you are studying full-time, undertaking an apprenticeship or becoming independent from your parents or carer.

Depending on your (or your family's) circumstances, you may be able to get Youth Allowance or **ABSTUDY** while at secondary school.

These payments provide financial support while you are looking for work, studying, training or undertaking an Australian apprenticeship.

Disability Support Pension may also be available to support young people who have a medical condition or disability.

To claim a payment like Youth Allowance or ABSTUDY, update details and get reminders, create a myGov account via **my.gov.au** and follow the steps to link your Centrelink member service.

To do this, you will need a Centrelink CRN or a linking code.

The myGov website is pretty simple and intuitive and steps you through each part of the process.

If you have a question about using myGov, you can ask the myGov digital assistant (DA). Go to the myGov website, select **Ask a question** and type your question. The DA will answer your question.

If you cannot register online visit a Centrelink service centre near you or call 132 307.



Centrelink for school-aged students

The main benefits for secondary school students are Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY. To find out if any other payments could apply to you, or when you might become eligible for other benefits, visit **www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/payments-students-and-trainees**

Youth Allowance

Youth Allowance is financial help for Australia residents who are:

- 16 to 21 and looking for full-time work, or
- 18 to 24 and studying full-time, or
- 16 to 24 and doing a full-time Australian Apprenticeship, or
- 16 to 17 and independent or needing to live away from home to study
- 16 to 17, studying full time and have completed year 12 or equivalent

This payment is income and assets tested to work out how much Youth Allowance you get.



ABSTUDY

ABSTUDY is financial help for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students or Australian apprentices enrolled in an approved course – for example at secondary school, TAFE or university – to cover the costs associated with studying (including travel), housing and living expenses

The amount of ABSTUDY you may get depends on personal circumstances such as whether or not you are living away from home.



Reach your savings goals

Setting a savings goal can be exciting. Your goal could be to have money aside 'just in case', or you might have a target like a dress for the school dance, a new pair of shoes or runners or an event. At the other end of the scale, you might be saving for a holiday at the end of the year or your first car.

Whatever your goal, the key is just start! Once you see your bank account building with a regular savings plan, it can be a sense of achievement.

Budget and save

It is hard to argue that most secondary students do not have an abundance of their own cash. Sure, parents might help in varying degrees, and many have a part-time job.

Whatever income you do have, it is wise to budget and, where possible, save!

Tips to successful saving

- What is the main prize (ie your desired purchase)?
- How much money will you need?
- Tell your family and friends about your goal (they'll keep you motivated)
- How much can you afford each week/fortnight/month?
- Work out how long it will take to achieve (this will manage your expectations)
- Check your bank statements and watch it grow



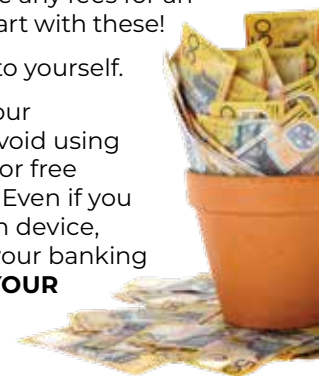
Banking

Do your research on what banks are best for students and young people and then which of their products will serve your needs best (ie everyday transaction accounts versus savings accounts).

When every cent counts, don't get stung by bank fees. Some online banks don't charge any fees for an account. Maybe start with these!

Keep your details to yourself.

When checking your accounts online, avoid using public computers or free wireless hotspots. Even if you are using your own device, always log out of your banking – **NEVER STORE YOUR PASSWORDS!**





A world of opportunity

Exploring beyond your own neighbourhood is enriching – providing new experiences and insights that can shape personal growth and development.



Capturing your sense of adventure

Opening the door to diverse cultures, ideas, and ways of living can broaden perspectives and foster greater understanding and empathy.

Stepping out of familiar surroundings encourages adaptability and resilience, teaching you how to navigate and appreciate different environments and communities.

This exploration also sparks curiosity and a sense of adventure, fueling creativity and inspiring new interests and passions.

It may happen inside your state, elsewhere in Australia or overseas.

Travelling in Australia

Australia is a huge country with different adventures to be had in every state. Once you have decided a holiday in Australia is for you, figure out what kind – action, nature, party, history or culture.

To get this planning started, decide:

1. How long you want to be away
2. How you will get around
3. How much money you have
4. Will you travel solo, with a partner, a friend or in a group?

If you have the time, driving is a great way to see Australia; vast open roads, hidden gems off the beaten track and the sixth longest coastline in the world.

If you are driving across, or around, Australia, be mindful that road laws vary from state to state. Before crossing borders, read up on where you are going and what the quirky road rules that apply in each state are, from speed limits to sharing roads with bikes, trams and pedestrians.

In some states, it's illegal to cross the border with fresh produce – this is to protect the local agriculture from pests like the fruit fly.

For ideas on where to go and what to do visit www.australia.com



Travelling overseas

Planning a trip adds to the excitement and anticipation of a new adventure, and being organised and informed will give you peace of mind when you arrive.

There is an overwhelming amount of information available to research on the internet. For a personalised travel plan, visit a travel agent, speak to a tour booking agent, or pop into your local bookstore and purchase a guide (travel books are a great memento of your adventure).

Ask friends and family for ideas, tips and advice, and join the conversation with like-minded travellers and those who have been there and done that on social media groups.





Tips for affordable travel

Let's get this planning started

- **What sort of trip do you want?** A working holiday, relaxing holiday, extended trip, one with volunteer opportunities, or a package tour.
- **Where do you want to go?** Another country where English is a common language, a western country, or somewhere culturally and linguistically diverse.
- **What's your destination like?** Research things like people, weather, geography, history, language, food, culture and customs.
- **What's your mode of travel?** If it's overseas, you're going to be travelling by air most likely, but once you get there, have some research under your belt about taxis, public transport, walking, cycling and car hire that will get you around.
- **What sort of accommodation?** Short stay or extended, hotel, hostel, backpackers, Airbnbs, or maybe a homestay or on-site accommodation like a university or college campus. There are many choices and most will come down to budget and style.
- **What's your itinerary?** List key destinations, travel dates and must-do activities like sightseeing and experiences.
- **What's your budget?** Work out how much money you will have and if it is enough. If not, you might need to readjust your trip to fit your budget. See tips in this section on affordable travel.
- **Is my destination considered 'safe'?** Find out if there are any medical alerts or travel warnings to the region you are planning on visiting at dfat.gov.au
- **Is a vaccination necessary?** Book an appointment with your GP to find out if you need any vaccinations or precautionary medications – these might need to go into your budget as some are quite costly.
Many countries now mandate that a COVID-19 vaccination is a condition of entry. The advice about COVID-19 vaccinations, age requirements and travel destinations are constantly evolving. Visit homeaffairs.gov.au/covid19/entering-and-leaving-australia for the most up-to-date information.
- **Is your passport current?** If you are applying for a passport for the first time, do so as soon as you can. Don't leave it to the last minute or you may pay more and have the added stress of it not being delivered on time. If you have a passport, check the expiration date before you book and check the conditions on passport validity as this can change depending on where you are travelling. Don't rely on your travel agent to tell you this. It is your responsibility. For more information about getting a new passport, renewing an existing one, the application process and relevant forms and fees, visit www.passports.gov.au

- **Going 'round the world:** If you plan to visit a number of countries, consider a 'round-the-world' airfare – there's quite a bit of flexibility with where you can fly and the fare is usually valid for 12 months of travel.
- **Keep an eye out for sales and specials:** Check out travel agents, airlines and online sites for regular specials and deals on flights and accommodation – if you have some flexibility with when you can travel, you'll often find last-minute or end-of-season discounts.
- **Travel off-peak:** Consider travelling at off-peak times or out of the main holiday season – prices can be less than half their full season equivalent.



- **Prepare your own food:** Dining out three times a day can get expensive; there are usually facilities for storing and cooking your own food at places like hostels, camping grounds and backpackers.
- **Talk to other travellers:** Get first-hand advice about local deals, what the going prices are, and options for inexpensive food, lodging and transport when you get to your destination.
- **Money:** Check with your bank about the best ATM card options for travellers. Many major banks offer debit/credit cards with lower ATM fees and exchange rate surcharges than their standard cards. Carry an emergency reserve of cash in a major international currency (US dollars or the Euro) that will tide you over in the event your card is lost or stolen. Make sure your bank/debit card can access your funds while overseas. It is a good idea to take a small amount of cash in the local currency in case you need something on arrival.





Travel and health

Looking after your health and wellbeing when you travel overseas is a no-brainer. You can't travel if you get sick or injured and you certainly don't want your long-awaited trip compromised or even cancelled because of an avoidable illness or accident.

Things to think about

- **General health and fitness** – have a full health and dental check before you travel. If you're planning an active holiday, make sure you have the fitness levels required for your planned activities like skiing, mountain climbing, rafting or trekking
- **Sexual health** – safe sex practices and your sexual health are important things to consider whether you are at home or travelling overseas
- **Vaccinations** – talk to your doctor about where you plan to travel and what vaccinations you will need

- **Medications** – talk to your doctor about medicines you may need to take with you or, if you have a health condition, about managing your current medications while overseas
- **First aid** – learn some basic first aid knowledge if you don't have any already, and pack a simple traveller's first aid or medical kit for handling minor accidents or injuries

If you get sick overseas or are involved in a medical emergency, contact your travel insurance provider as soon as possible. Travel insurance companies often have 24-hour assistance centres that you can contact from anywhere in the world. Take your travel insurance policy information and contact numbers with you so you can easily contact your insurer from overseas. Leave details of your travel insurance policy with family or friends back home.

Emergency contacts

Take contact details for places you may need in an emergency, such as the local Australian Embassy and your travel insurer's emergency contact number. Travel with emergency contact details like a family member or friend back home, and make sure they have your travel itinerary, insurance details and a copy of your passport. Stay in regular contact with loved ones in Australia.

Register your travel plans

Register your travel plans with the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade before you leave Australia. The registration information you provide will help someone contact or find you in an emergency – whether it is a natural disaster, civil disturbance or family emergency. Register at orao.dfat.gov.au

Food and drink

Be sensible about what you eat and drink when you travel overseas. As a general rule drink bottled water, avoid ice and beware of uncooked foods. Do your research and discover more tips about consuming specific foods and drinks in the country you are travelling.





Insurance

Do not leave Australia without travel insurance. If you can't afford insurance, you probably shouldn't be going overseas.

Medicare does not cover you outside of Australia. Some hospitals overseas will not even admit injured people who do not have insurance coverage, no matter how serious their condition may be.

Medical treatment overseas can leave a huge dent in your hard-earned savings. If you are seriously injured, it could be in the tens, even hundreds, of thousands of dollars. For the sake of a few hundred dollars, you will have peace of mind and so will your family. Travel insurance is also great if you lose a valuable item and some will cover expenses incurred by delayed or cancelled flights. There are many good deals on travel insurance for young people but remember to read the fine print and compare cover options between companies. Once you have chosen be very clear about what your insurance policy covers and give a copy to someone back at home.

If you extend your stay overseas, don't forget to extend your insurance before it expires to make sure you're never without it.



Discount cards

Planning to travel in Australia or overseas? You might like to consider buying an internationally recognised student card.

Discount card options for students, travellers under the age of 31 years old and teachers can help your money go further while travelling in Australia and overseas.

The International Student Identity Card for students and the International Youth Travel Card for non-students offer savings on attractions and travel in many countries. There are also specific discount cards and memberships to organisations like Youth Hostels Association (YHA) Australia or backpackers' groups.



These cards give you access to discounts and benefits both in Australia and overseas to save on airfares, accommodation, entry to museums and attractions, even food and shopping.

A quick online search should turn up a few companies that offer these cards. Before you hand over money for any concession card, though, do a bit of research. As a starting point, check out International Student Identity Card website at www.isic.org



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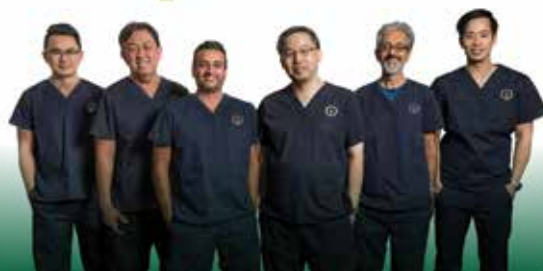
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Working overseas

Most young people return home from their overseas working holiday describing it as ‘a life-changing experience’. Working overseas can be a great way to travel, meet people, experience new things, and you’re getting paid (bonus).

It can be a good career move too. Many Australian employers are impressed by overseas work experience on a resume because it demonstrates initiative, confidence, drive and ability to adapt to different circumstances.

Work types

Most people find it fairly easy to get some sort of work overseas. Common choices for overseas work include:

- Hospitality – pubs, bars, cafes and restaurants
- Summer camps or ski fields
- Office/administration
- Teaching English as a Second Language (www.tefl.com)

Working holiday visas

Australia has agreements with several countries that allow young Australians to get a working holiday visa so you can legally work in the countries you’re visiting.

Things to consider

- **Positions available** – What sort of jobs will accept travellers and what do they pay?
- **Living costs** – How much will you need to live on?
- **Job environment** – Will you be respected, and will you have to work long hours and weekends?
- **Living arrangements** – Is accommodation included and if not, what accommodation and other amenities are available near the workplace?
- **Language, culture and customs** – Can you learn the language and are there any laws and customs affecting behaviour, dress, food and drinking?
- **Safety** – Is the location safe for foreigners and is the workplace generally safe?

There are agencies, companies and other organisations that can help you find a job and prepare for your trip.



Studying overseas

Studying overseas is an exciting, fun and rewarding experience for high school and university students.

There are many websites that can help you find out more about studying overseas, and most universities have a ‘Study Abroad’ office to assist international students.

Financial assistance schemes to study overseas are available, along with scholarship opportunities for international exchange programs for high school students.

For more information visit <https://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/before-you-go/activities/studying>



#FriendBetter with RUOK?™

Helping a mate who's feeling lonely

Loneliness is about how disconnected we feel, rather than how many people we know. Some people feel lonely when they don't have friends, family, or other connections around them. But that isn't always the case. You can also feel lonely surrounded by people. Your friend could be feeling misunderstood, like they don't fit in or are left out. If you're worried a mate might be lonely, keep reading to find how you can help them feel connected.

Spot The Signs

You might be thinking, 'but I'm their friend so why would they be lonely?'. It's not personal. We all go through stages in our lives where our interests or situation change, which can impact how connected we feel to the people around us. Below are some things to look for that could indicate your friend is feeling lonely.

- **Spending a lot of time alone:** If your friend is feeling disconnected, they actually might spend more time alone (whether it's staying home, eating alone at lunch time, doing things solo) for a number of reasons such as not wanting to explain what they're going through, struggling to make conversation, not wanting to 'burden' people or feeling embarrassed.
- **Big life changes:** Sometimes it isn't about the signs you see in a person, but instead what is happening around them or to them that no one else in their social network is going through. Is your friend going through a breakup, family issues, defining their identity, moving out of home or moving house, starting work or university, or struggling with an illness or injury?
- **Not joining in as much:** Have they stopped contributing to conversations in person, online or in group chats?
- **'I can't be bothered':** Not wanting to do things they used to love or saying, 'everything feels like an effort', 'I'm not keen', 'I can't be bothered' or 'I feel lost' could be a sign they're feeling disconnected.





“Your friend feeling lonely doesn’t mean they don’t like you anymore or that they don’t value your friendship. In fact, they could want to hang out more or life situations/new interests might mean they want to expand their connections.”



What To Say & Do

Feeling lonely can be difficult to talk about, but there are things you can do to help your friend build meaningful social connections and feel more comfortable talking about what they’re feeling.

- **Check in:** Your friend might be too scared to explain how they’re feeling, so take the pressure off them by checking in and giving them space to share. If they’re going through something big, acknowledge it and ask them how they’re feeling. Likewise, if they don’t seem like themselves, ask if they’re OK and start a conversation. You can follow our four steps to having an R U OK? conversation.
- **Listen:** You don’t need to be going through the same experience as them to be a good friend. Having someone take the time to listen without judgement and try to understand can make your friend feel less lonely. Also, knowing what’s causing them to feel lonely might help you brainstorm solutions together.
- **Include them:** Continue to chat to them and invite them places. They might not say yes every time, but the invitation is a sign you care about them which can help them with feelings of loneliness. Be patient.
- **Try something new:** Have their interests changed? Ask them if there’s a new activity that excites them or if they’d like to volunteer in a space they’re passionate about. If they’re nervous about meeting new people, you can offer to go along with them.
- **Encourage them to seek professional help:** Suggest they connect with a health professional or peer support avenue for specific advice and ongoing guidance. We have included a list under ‘helpful resources’.

Don’t Take It Personally

Your friend feeling lonely doesn’t mean they don’t like you anymore or that they don’t value your friendship. In fact, they could want to hang out more or life situations/new interests might mean they want to expand their connections. Avoid saying things like, ‘but you have me’ or ‘aren’t I enough?’ because this might make them feel bad for sharing with you how they feel.

Helpful Resources

Keep these resources handy for you and your friend.

- Visit reachout.com for tips on what to do if you’re lonely.
- Use the directory at endingloneliness.com.au to find organisations and groups to connect with in your local community’

Support lines and chat rooms for your friend to seek professional help

- reachout.com
- headspace.org.au, 1800 650 890 (9am – 1am AEST every day)
- beyondblue.org.au, 1300 22 4636 (24/7)
- kidshelpline.com.au, 1800 55 1800 (24/7, Ages 5-25, helpline, webchat, email)

About #FriendBetter with R U OK?

Like good friends, some things are just better together. The support of a good mate can help someone feel connected and supported as they navigate life’s ups and downs.

That’s why R U OK? have put together free resources, to help you #FriendBetter and know how to have those important conversations.

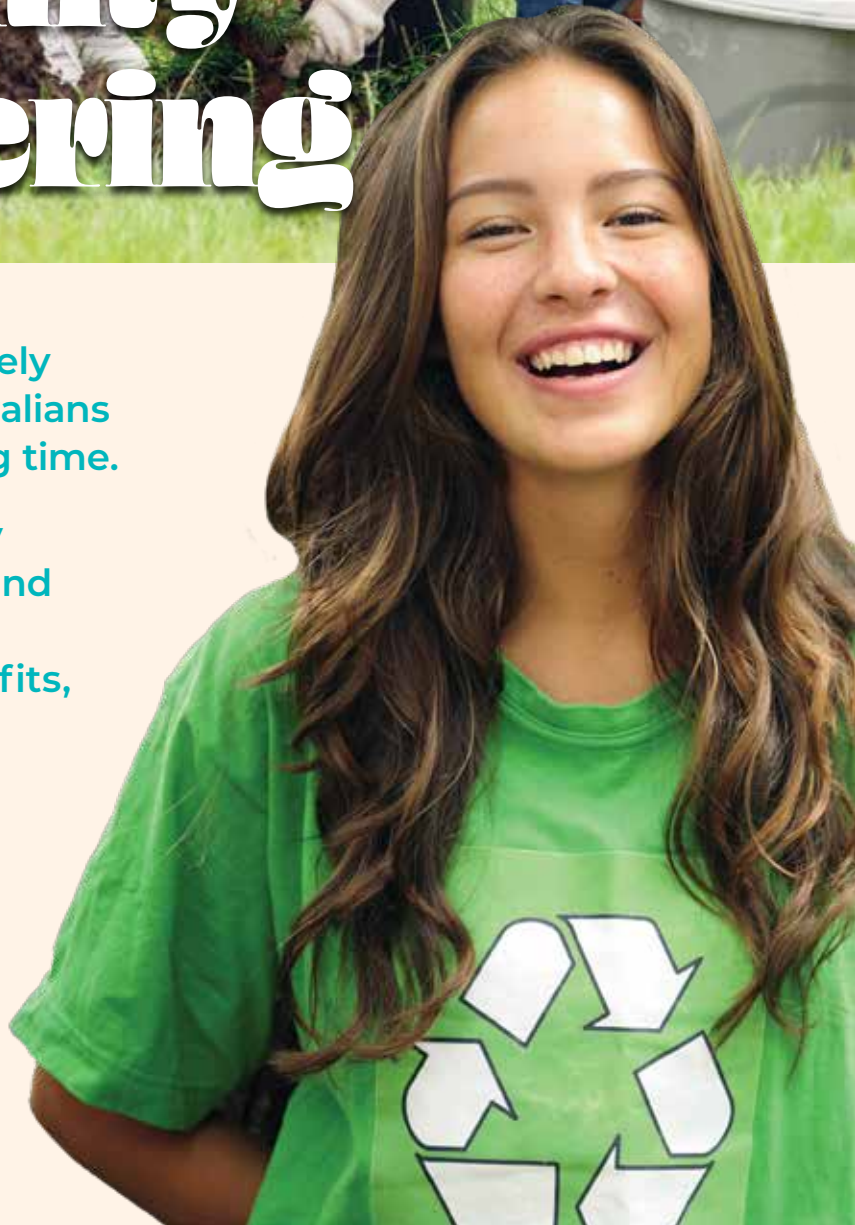
For free tips to help you support your mates visit ruok.org.au/friendbetter



The Power of Community Volunteering

Community volunteering is a hugely impactful activity for young Australians that goes beyond simply donating time.

Its about building a better society while fostering personal growth and development. For young people, volunteering provides many benefits, from developing critical life skills to enhancing social connections, all while making a real difference in their communities.



Building Life Skills

One of the most significant advantages of volunteering for young Australians is the opportunity to develop essential life skills. In the dynamic environment of a volunteer organisation, you can learn to communicate effectively, work collaboratively, and solve problems creatively. These experiences are invaluable as they prepare for adulthood.

Examples include working on a community garden project to enhance planning skills and teamwork. These types of projects will require you to coordinate tasks, manage time, and sometimes deal with unforeseen challenges, all of which are critical skills in both personal and professional settings. Once complete, the sense of accomplishment will boost confidence and self-esteem.

Promoting Mental Health and Well-being

Engaging in volunteer work can enhance your own mental health and wellbeing. Adolescence can be a stressful time, with academic pressures, social challenges, and the uncertainties of the future weighing heavily on young minds.

Volunteering offers a positive outlet for these stresses, providing a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Research has shown that volunteering can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety by fostering a sense of belonging and accomplishment.

Examples includes volunteering at an animal shelter or helping out at a local food bank.

Take a break from your everyday stresses by focusing on helping others. This shift in focus can be incredibly therapeutic, promoting a more positive outlook on life.

Enhancing Social Connections

Volunteering plays a crucial role in helping young people build social connections. In an increasingly digital world, where interactions are often confined to screens, face-to-face communication and teamwork are becoming rare yet essential skills. Through volunteering, you can form meaningful relationships with peers and mentors from diverse backgrounds.

Examples include participating in a local charity event or community clean-up day where you can meet and engage with people you might not cross paths with in your everyday lives.

These interactions can broaden your perspectives, foster empathy, and build a sense of community. Friendships and networks developed through volunteering can provide support and encouragement, helping you navigate the challenges of adolescence.



Instilling a Sense of Civic Responsibility

Community volunteering helps instil a sense of civic responsibility and social awareness in young people, teaching the importance of contributing to your communities and the impact you can have as an active and engaged citizen.

This sense of responsibility can inspire lifelong habits of civic engagement and philanthropy.

By participating in volunteer activities, you can see firsthand the challenges other communities face, such as homelessness, environmental degradation, or social inequality. These experiences may ignite a passion for social change and inspire you to pursue careers in fields like social work, environmental science, or public policy. Understanding the importance of giving back will help shape your values and actions long into adulthood.



Exploring career interests

Volunteering provides young people with a platform to explore different career interests. It offers hands-on experience in various fields, allowing you to gain insights and develop skills relevant to potential future careers.

Examples include volunteering at a hospital where you can get a glimpse into the healthcare industry or working on a community art project that may spark an interest in the arts.

These experiences are not only enriching but can also enhance your resume, making you a more attractive candidate for future employers and educational institutions.

Practical skills and experiences gained through volunteering will set you apart in an increasingly competitive job market.



Where to volunteer

There is a wealth of community volunteering opportunities for young people with a variety of interests and passions. Whether your interests lie in environmental conservation, social justice, animal welfare, or emergency services, there is a volunteering opportunity to suit every passion.

Here are some programs to get you thinking about how you can contribute.

Surf Life Saving Australia

For those interested in beach safety and lifesaving, Surf Life Saving Australia provides an excellent opportunity. Young volunteers can train to become surf lifesavers, helping to keep Australia's beaches safe. This role involves learning vital skills such as first aid, water rescue techniques, and community education about beach safety.



Conservation Volunteers Australia

Conservation Volunteers Australia engages young people in environmental conservation projects across the country. Volunteers can participate in activities like tree planting, habitat restoration, and wildlife monitoring. These projects are not only crucial for preserving Australia's unique ecosystems but also provide hands-on experience in environmental science and sustainability.

Local community centres and libraries

Many local community centres and libraries offer volunteer programs for young people. These can include helping with after-school programs, assisting in organising community events, and supporting literacy initiatives. Volunteering locally allows young people to directly contribute to their immediate communities and build strong local connections.



Scouts Australia

Scouts Australia offers numerous volunteering roles for young people interested in leadership and community service. Volunteers can help run local scout groups, organise events, and participate in environmental projects. Scouting provides a structured yet fun environment to develop leadership skills and community awareness.

State Emergency Service (SES)

The SES offers young people the chance to volunteer in emergency response and disaster relief. Volunteers can get involved in storm damage repair, flood response, and search and rescue operations. This role provides practical skills in emergency management and a deep sense of community service.



Australian Red Cross

The Australian Red Cross offers a range of volunteer opportunities suitable for young people. From helping out in emergency services and disaster response to supporting community health programs and fundraising initiatives, there are numerous ways for young Australians to get involved. These opportunities allow volunteers to develop skills in first aid, crisis management, and community support.

RSPCA Australia

Animal lovers can volunteer with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). Young volunteers can assist with animal care, help with fundraising events, and support educational programs about animal welfare. Volunteering at the RSPCA can be particularly rewarding for those interested in veterinary science or animal care professions.



Community support organisations

Look up charity-based organisations in your state that support people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged by distributing essential items like food, clothing and hygiene products.

Search food bank organisations like OzHarvest and Second Bite, or charities that may run collection drives or special event days like Vinnies, Salvos, Smith Family or Youth Off The Streets.





**NEED
MORE?**

Find out more
about volunteering
opportunities in your
state at:

Age requirements and police checks

Many volunteer positions require you to be 18 or older, but there are opportunities for younger people. Unless it clearly states that you have to be 18 or over, assume it's OK to apply for a volunteer position.

Some organisations, especially those that work with children, require a police check or a Working with Children Check. If this kind of check is required, the organisation you're volunteering for can help organise it for you.

Know your rights

Volunteers are not a substitute for paid workers, so be aware of employers who might try to use volunteers as cheap or free labour.

You have the right to:

- A healthy and safe environment
- An orientation or induction session
- Training and supervision
- Say 'no' if you are uncomfortable or think you are being exploited
- Not work in a position previously held by a paid worker

Volunteering overseas

While there are plenty of opportunities to volunteer in your own backyard, there's a whole world out there seeking volunteers to help with a multitude of projects and programs.

Volunteering overseas is a great way to combine your wanderlust and passion for making a positive impact on the world. A quick online search will turn up heaps of organisations that can find overseas volunteer placements for you.

Before you sign up for anything, make sure you check out the tips and advice on smartraveller.gov.au/before-you-go/activities/volunteering

Visit www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/advice-for-life/travel/travelling-overseas

For more about
volunteering
opportunities, your rights
and responsibilities go to:

Australian Capital Territory
volunteeringact.org.au

New South Wales
volunteering.nsw.gov.au

Northern Territory
volunteeringsa-nt.org.au

Queensland
volunteeringqld.org.au

South Australia
volunteeringsa-nt.org.au

Tasmania
volunteeringtas.org.au

Victoria
volunteer.vic.gov.au

Western Australia
volunteeringwa.org.au





Party Safe

Let's face it, having a good time, socialising and hanging out with friends is basically the best part about being young. This chapter gives you some info about staying safe while you're having a good time. It's also important to make sure those around you are safe and know how you can help if someone finds themselves in trouble.



How to play safe

- Know where you're going and how you're getting there
- Plan how you're getting home – for example, take cash for a taxi or nominate a designated driver who will remain sober
- Have a plan B to get home if plan A falls through – for example, ask someone's parent if they can pick you up if you can't get a taxi
- Remember that you don't have to use alcohol or other drugs to have fun and don't feel pressured into using them
- Eat well before heading out – a full stomach slows the absorption of alcohol
- Don't let other people top up your drinks
- Stay close to friends you trust
- Take condoms with you if you think you might end up having sex – and use them
- Never get into a car with a driver who has been drinking
- Remember that your judgement may be impaired if you've been drinking or taking drugs so don't take risks such as diving into water or fooling around near swimming pools
- If you feel unsafe at a venue or party, leave

Hosting a party at home

- Register your party with your local police at least one week in advance
- State that the party is invitation only and ask your guests not to spread the word to others via SMS or social media
- If you are sending invites out via Facebook, make sure the event is set to private
- Indicate on the invitation whether alcohol is provided or is BYO or if the event is alcohol-free
- Secure or hide all valuables
- Make sure responsible adults are on hand to monitor the party
- Serve plenty of food – guests are more likely to get drunk on an empty stomach
- Serve plenty of water and soft drinks
- Have a plan of action if a guest becomes drunk or ill – this might involve arranging for them to get home safely or calling 000 if they're seriously ill
- Ask gatecrashers to leave immediately or threaten that the police will be called
- Call the police if you feel that a situation is beyond your control



One punch attacks

A single punch to the head can have devastating consequences. A one punch attack, coward punch or king hit, whatever you choose to call it, is never justified and in many cases has resulted in serious brain injury or death, particularly among young Australians. In a split second, a young person's life, dreams and goals can be shattered by an instance of violence during what was meant to be an enjoyable night out. For the perpetrator, a criminal record and potential imprisonment are just the beginning. They also have to deal with a lifetime of regret for their reckless actions. Always remember the very real consequences that a fight can have.

Identify potential violence

Although you should try to remove yourself from a potentially violent situation, it is not always easy or safe to walk away. Each situation needs to be considered on its merits and the appropriate action taken. To deal with a potential threatening or violent situation, some suggested techniques include:

- Try to talk your way out of it
- Get a bouncer involved
- Ignore the person/pretend you didn't hear or understand
- Remain calm or be polite
- Make it known that you are not looking for trouble
- Don't turn away, leaving you open to be hit from behind



Recognising potentially violent situations

During a night out it is important to be aware of your surroundings and how others are behaving. A person's body language can convey information on their potential for violent behaviour. Recognising the signals and paying close attention to what is being said and how it is being said can help to warn you of impending trouble. By understanding and interpreting body language information you can help to prevent and avoid violent situations. Some of the signs to look out for include:

Voice

- Changes in pitch and volume
- Shouting or muttering
- Significant changes in the pace of speech delivery
- Speech directed in 'general' and not at you

Body

- Appearing tense or agitated
- Increase in restless body movements

Face

- Increase in muscular tension
- Grinding of jaw
- Sudden loss of colour

Legs and feet

- Legs swinging, foot tapping

Arms

- Arms folded or raised
- Rapid movement or sudden change in position

Hands

- Closing of hands to make a fist
- Tapping of fingers on surface with changes in rhythm
- Thumping fist or slapping hand on another object
- Picking up objects

Posture

- Departure from usual or previous posture
- Moving away or moving back



STOP. One Punch Can Kill began in Victoria after the tragic death of David Cassai on NYE 2012 from a senseless, unprovoked violent attack ending his life with a ferocious one punch.

This organisation, co-founded by David's mum Caterina, aims to unite all people who have been affected by senseless acts of street and social violence in an effort to work towards creating a safer community and to raise awareness that one punch can and DOES kill.

In 2014, *STOP. One Punch Can Kill* successfully petitioned the Victorian Government to introduce the 'Coward's Punch Manslaughter' law that carries a 10-year minimum non-parole period.

Caterina is available to speak to schools, sporting and other groups about Harm Prevention, highlighting her son's senseless death in a moving presentation.

For more, visit www.stoponepunchcankill.org

Facts about alcohol

Alcohol is the most widely used drug in Australia. Alcohol is a depressant, meaning it slows down the messages travelling between the brain and the body. Alcohol affects every individual differently based on a range of factors, including:

- Your size, weight and health
- Whether you're used to alcohol consumption
- Whether other drugs are taken around the same time
- The amount of alcohol consumed
- The strength of the alcohol



Effects

Some common effects of alcohol consumption include:

- Feeling relaxed
- Slower reflexes
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased confidence
- Feeling happier or sadder (depending on your mood)

Excessive consumption may lead to:

- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Nausea/vomiting
- Memory loss
- Passing out
- Coma

Regular consumption of alcohol may eventually have the following long-term effects:

- Regular colds/flu
- Depression
- Poor memory and brain damage
- Difficulty getting an erection
- Difficulty having children
- Liver disease
- Cancer
- High blood pressure and heart disease
- Financial, work and social problems

Binge drinking

The term 'binge drinking' generally refers to drinking heavily over a short period of time with the intention of getting drunk, resulting in immediate and severe intoxication. Binge drinking can be harmful in a number of ways:

- **Short-term harms** including hangovers, headaches, nausea, shakiness and possibly vomiting and memory loss. There is also the risk of alcohol poisoning which can cause death.
- **Behaviour-based risks** including falls, assaults, car accidents, shame and embarrassment, loss of valuable items and financial losses through reckless spending while intoxicated.
- **Long-term harms** including becoming dependent on alcohol and developing liver or brain damage.



What is a standard drink?

A standard drink is one that contains 10 grams of alcohol. Keep in mind that not all drinks contain the same concentration of alcohol and most venues do not serve standard drink sizes. Beware of bigger glasses, bottles or cans which hold more than one standard drink. If you're not sure, check out the label.



Light Beer
425ml
2.7% alc/vol



Mid-Strength Beer
375ml
3.5% alc/vol



Full-Strength Beer
285ml
4.9% alc/vol



Regular Cider
285ml
4.9% alc/vol



Sparkling Wine
100ml
13% alc/vol



Wine
100ml
13% alc/vol



Pre-Mixed Spirits
275ml
5% alc/vol



Straight Spirits
30ml
40% alc/vol



Tips for low-risk drinking

- **Set limits for yourself and stick to them.** Don't let other people pressure you into drinking more than you want.
- **Quench your thirst first.** Have a non-alcoholic drink first if you are thirsty.
- **Drink slowly.** Take sips, not gulps.
- **Drink from a small glass.** Some wine glasses can hold several standard drinks.
- **Be aware of exactly what you're drinking.** Pre-mixed drinks can be quite strong, even if they don't taste like strong alcohol.
- **Eat before and while drinking.** Avoid salty snacks as they can make you thirsty.
- **Avoid getting into 'rounds' or 'shouts'.** They are likely to make you drink more than you would otherwise.
- **Avoid 'top ups'.** Drink one drink at a time so it's easier to keep track of how much you are drinking.

Getting help for a drinking problem

If your use of alcohol is affecting your health, family, relationships, work, school, financial or other life situations, you should try to get help. Call the Australian Drug Foundation on **1300 85 85 84** or visit adf.org.au for support services near you.



Drink spiking

Drink spiking is when someone deliberately adds alcohol or another drug to your drink without your knowledge. People may spike drinks as a prank to get someone drunk or high, but also sometimes to assault or rob someone. Estimates suggest that one-third of drink spiking incidents are associated with a sexual attack. Drink spiking is illegal in all Australian states and territories and penalties include fines and imprisonment ranging from two to 25 years.

Most commonly, drinks are spiked with extra alcohol. Despite media reporting, drink spiking with drugs such as GHB and Rohypnol is very rare. Drugs that are used to spike drinks are usually depressants that make you act like you are drunk or feel like you are about to pass out.

How do I stop my drink being spiked?

- Always watch your drinks and your friend's drinks when you're out at a pub, club or party
- Many people have their drinks spiked by someone they know – to avoid this, buy or pour your own drinks
- If someone you don't know well offers you a drink, always go to the bar with them

How do I know if my drink has been spiked?

If your drink has been spiked, you may not be able to see, smell or taste it. The drug or extra alcohol may be colourless and odourless and may not affect the taste of your drink. Warning signs include:

- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Feeling ill or sleepy
- Feeling drunk even if you think you haven't had much alcohol to drink
- Passing out
- Waking up feeling uncomfortable and confused, with memory blanks about the night before

What to do if your drink is spiked

- Ask someone you trust to help you get to a safe place
- If you feel unwell or have been sexually assaulted, go to the emergency department of the nearest hospital
- Ask your doctor to test for the presence of drugs – urine or blood tests can pick up traces of certain drugs up to 24 hours later



Helping a drunk friend

Friends look out for each other, and that's especially important when you've been drinking. Drinking alcohol involves some very real risks. If one of your friends is in a bad way, there are things you can do to help keep them safe. You may also want to know how to talk to them afterwards if you have concerns about their drinking.

How can I tell if my friend needs help?

Your friend may need help if they:

- Can't talk properly and have glazed eyes
- Are acting strangely and doing stuff they wouldn't normally do
- Are vomiting
- Are falling over and running into things or can't walk straight
- Have passed out

What should I do?

Be there for them

The most important thing to do when a friend is seriously drunk is to stay with them. If you can't be there, make sure that another friend, who isn't as drunk as they are, stays with them.

Stop the booze and start the food

Try to get your friend to eat something, or to drink a non-alcoholic drink. If possible, prevent them from drinking any more alcohol. Taking them to get something to eat can be a good way of slowing down their drinking without it seeming like you're trying to tell them what to do.

Recovery position

If your friend wants to lie down, make sure they're on their side, with something behind their back to prevent them rolling over on to their back or stomach. It's important to do this, because if they vomit while lying on their back they can choke.

Get them home safely

Try to make sure your friend makes it home okay, even if it means having them stay over at your place for the night.

Get help

If your friend loses consciousness and can't be woken, call an ambulance immediately and rally any nearby adults for support.

How do I know if my friend is in trouble?

Sometimes being drunk is relatively harmless and just results in a hangover the next day. However, excessive drinking can cause alcohol poisoning, which can potentially cause your friend some serious damage. The following are signs of alcohol poisoning:

- Mental confusion, passing out or coma
- Vomiting
- Seizures/shaking
- Slow or irregular breathing
- Low body temperature, paleness and blue skin

Call 000 if your friend is experiencing any of these symptoms.

Afterwards

If you're worried about your friend, or annoyed that they ruined your night, say something to them another time – there's nothing to be gained by arguing with them while they're drunk.

When it's a regular thing

If you're worried about your friend's drinking, or if they get seriously drunk on a regular basis, you might want to talk to them about it sometime when you're both feeling a bit better.

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Our mission is dedicated to fostering career fulfilment and enhancing well-being, both within the workplace and beyond, through holistic and inner-driven approaches. These include cultivating self-awareness, career alignment, and skill development methods. These approaches provide individuals with the necessary tools for career success and facilitate personal growth and achievement.

Our consultations and group-based Career Growth and Wellness Programmes cater to students, graduates, value-led leaders, managers, and parents re-entering the workforce. Individuals can expect improved resume quality, accelerated job search support, enhanced interview performance, and greater alignment with their career goals through a collaborative approach.

View our full list of services on our website
www.skillsforyourcareer.com

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Facts about drugs

Illicit drugs are never safe, and when you take them you're not only damaging your health but breaking the law. Taking drugs affects your health and creates havoc with your social life, work, school, friends and family. Drugs affect your central nervous system. As a young person, your brain is still growing and won't be fully formed until your mid-20s. Taking drugs affects your developing brain by:

- damaging connections within the brain
- reducing your ability to experience pleasure or reward
- causing memory and learning problems
- making it hard to control impulses

Make sure you're aware of how different types of drugs can affect you.



Say no to drugs

Illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, MDMA (ecstasy), LSD, methamphetamine (ice) and cannabis (except for medicinal purposes) are illegal to possess, use, sell or manufacture in Australia. Penalties for drug offenses range from fines to lengthy imprisonment.



Effects

The effects of drug use can vary depending on the specific drug used, individual factors, frequency of use, and other contextual variables.

Common effects of recreational drug use:

Altered perception and sensory distortions: Drugs like hallucinogens or psychedelics can cause visual and auditory hallucinations, changes in colours and patterns, and an altered sense of time. These effects can be disorienting and potentially lead to unpredictable or dangerous behaviours.

Impaired judgment and decision-making: Drugs like alcohol, cannabis, and stimulants can impair cognitive processes, inhibitions, and impulse control, increasing the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviours like unprotected sex, driving under the influence, or taking other dangerous substances.

Increased risk of substance abuse and addiction: Experimentation with recreational drugs at a young age can significantly increase the risk of developing substance abuse and addiction problems later in life. The developing brain of a young person is more vulnerable to the addictive properties of drugs, and early exposure can alter brain chemistry and increase the likelihood of dependence.

Social and Interpersonal Consequences: Social lives and interpersonal relationships may lead to isolation from non-drug-using peers, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, and conflicts with family and friends. Drug use can also create a divide between individuals who use drugs and those who do not, leading to strained relationships and a loss of social support systems.



Ways to say no to drugs

You can say no. But, if you're feeling nervous about delivering your "NO" with confidence try these tactics.

Assertiveness

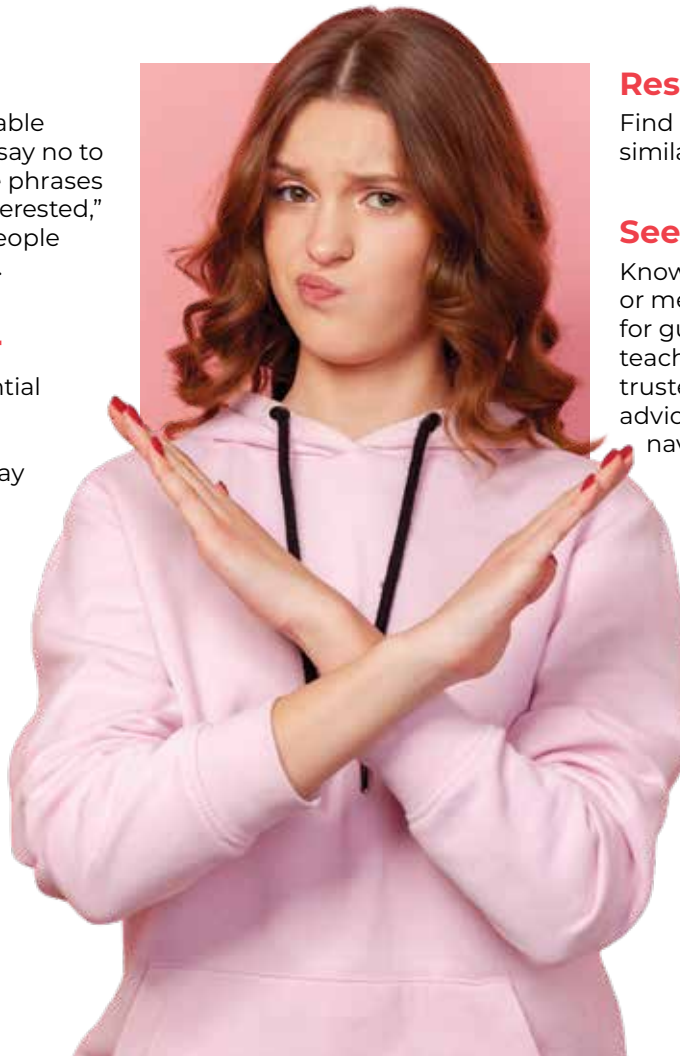
Feel confident and comfortable expressing your decision to say no to drugs with short and simple phrases - "No, thank you," "I'm not interested," or "I don't do drugs" to let people know you just don't want to.

Knowledge is power

By understanding the potential physical, mental, and social effects of drugs you can strengthen your resolve to say no. Use the resources in this booklet or speak to your school counsellor.

Set personal boundaries

Understand your own values and priorities and be firm in sticking with your decisions. Define your limits and communicate them openly with friends, so there is no ambiguity about where you stand on drug use.



Resist peer pressure

Find like-minded friends who share similar values and goals.

Seek support

Know who the supportive adults or mentors are that you can turn to for guidance and support. Parents, teachers, counsellors, or other trusted adults can provide valuable advice, offer a listening ear, and help navigate challenging situations.

Engage in positive activities

Find activities that provide interest, fun, connection and passion. This could be sports, arts, clubs, community service, or other activities that provide a sense of purpose and create a like-minded social network.

Types of drugs

Any drug use carries risk! The effects of drugs can vary based on factors like the individual's physiology, dosage, and method of administration. Additionally, the illegal production and distribution of drugs can lead to unsafe substances and unpredictable outcomes. Prioritise your health and wellbeing by making informed decisions and seeking support if needed.

Cannabis, also known as marijuana or weed, is a plant-based drug that can lead to memory and concentration problems, decreased motivation, and potential mental health issues.

Stimulants include drugs like amphetamines (speed) and cocaine. Short-term effects may include increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and heightened focus. However, regular use can lead to addiction, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and serious health problems like heart and liver damage.

Hallucinogens can alter perception, thoughts, and feelings. The effects can vary widely depending on the individual and the dosage. However, hallucinogens carry the risk of triggering psychological distress, anxiety, and even long-lasting psychological issues.

MDMA, commonly known as ecstasy or 'molly', is a synthetic drug that produces a combination of stimulant and hallucinogenic effects. It can lead to overheating, dehydration, and serious health risks, including heart and kidney problems. It can also negatively impact mood, memory, and cognitive function.

Prescription medications can include opioids (codeine, oxycodone), benzodiazepines (Xanax, Valium), and stimulants (Adderall, Ritalin). Misusing prescription drugs can have severe consequences, including addiction, respiratory depression, and overdose.

If you or someone you know is struggling with drug use, it's important to reach out to a healthcare professional, counsellor, or helpline for assistance and guidance.



Vapes cause harm

Did you know ... a single vape can contain the same amount of nicotine as 50 cigarettes?

Vaping is very harmful and can lead to addiction, poisoning, acute nicotine toxicity, respiratory problems and lung injury.

These battery-operated devices heat a liquid to produce a vapour that users inhale and are designed to deliver nicotine and/or other chemicals via an aerosol vapour directly to your lungs.

Facts & stats

- Young people who try vapes are three times as likely to take up smoking as those who have never vaped.
- More than 30% of young Australians (14–17 year-olds) have vaped.
- More than 60% of 15–24-year-olds had never smoked when they started vaping.
- Data from 2023 shows:
 - 1 in 7 Australians aged 14–17 years currently vape.
 - 1 in 5 Australians aged 18–24 currently vape.
- Data from 2024 shows that nearly 1 in 2 Australians aged 18–24 have tried to **quit** vaping.

Can I legally vape?

No. It's actually against the law for anyone to buy vapes containing nicotine without a prescription from your doctor.

It's also against the law for retailers to sell any kind of vape or vaping accessory to children under 18 years old, or for anyone to buy a vape on their behalf.

More reforms in Australia are underway that will increase penalties for the importation, manufacture, supply, advertisement and possession in commercial quantities of unlawful vapes.

Help me quit

Here's where to go for help quitting the vape!

Healthcare Providers: Visit a GP or a healthcare professional for personalised advice and access to quitting aids like nicotine replacement therapy or prescription medications.

Phone support: Call Quitline Australia (13 7848) for confidential support and counselling over the phone.

Online resources: Visit quit.org.au for a range of tools, including quitting plans, motivational tips, and educational materials about the risks of vaping and strategies for quitting.

Mobile apps: Apps like My QuitBuddy and QuitCoach can help you track your progress, manage cravings, and stay motivated throughout your quitting journey.

School counselling services: Ask a guidance/wellbeing staff member at school to provide information and resources including where you can join a local support group.

Harmful effects of smoking

Smoking cigarettes can have numerous harmful effects on young people. Here are some facts highlighting the risks and dangers associated with smoking:

Health problems

Increased respiratory issues such as coughing, wheezing, and asthma. Potential to develop chronic conditions like bronchitis, and emphysema and life-threatening diseases like lung cancer, heart disease, and stroke later in life.



Can I legally smoke?

It is illegal to sell or supply tobacco products to young people under the age of 18. In some states, the police can confiscate your cigarettes or other tobacco products if they think you are under 18. To find out more, visit the Youth Law Australia website at yla.org.au and select the state a state you live in or are visiting.



Physical fitness

Chemicals such as nicotine and carbon monoxide reduces lung capacity, leading to decreased endurance, reduced stamina, and poor overall physical performance. This can affect participation in sports, recreational activities, and overall fitness levels.



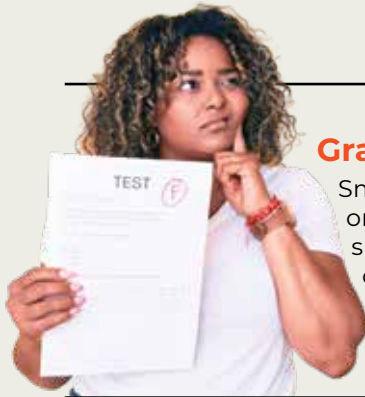
Addiction

Nicotine is an addictive substance that can lead to dependence. Smoking at a young age put you at higher risk of developing nicotine addiction, which can be difficult to overcome.



Grades

Smoking can have a negative impact on academic performance as young smokers are more likely to have decreased concentration, impaired memory, and reduced cognitive abilities.



Cost

Smoking is an expensive habit. Spend your money and things that bring you joy!



Secondhand smoke

Don't put others at risk too. Your smoke may increase the risk of respiratory problems, asthma attacks, ear infections, and other health issues in those around you.



Get help to quit smoking
<https://www.quit.org.au/articles/about-quitline-13-7848/>

☎ 13 7848

🌐 www.quit.org.au

My QuitBuddy

My QuitBuddy is an app that helps you get, and stay, smoke-free. It provides helpful tips and distractions to overcome cravings, tracking systems to chart your progress and the facts to help you understand the impact smoking has on your health.





When school ends

You can follow many pathways out of the school grounds.

It could be an apprenticeship, traineeship, cadetship or further study. Maybe you want to head straight into the workforce, start a business or take a gap year to think about it some more.

While it is great to have options, you do not have to lock yourself into one while you are still finding out what you like.

It is good to have a plan, and maybe even a back-up plan, to work towards while you are at school. It will keep you focused and motivated.

Keep discussing your options with your parents/guardians, friends, teachers and people you look up to.



Apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships

Apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships combine training and work that will lead to a formal qualification.

Examples of apprenticeships range from trades like an electrician, plumber, carpenter or hairdresser.

Usually, your employer will pay your training and you study and work at the same time.

This is great way to get a qualification because you are studying and learning on the job while also earning a wage.

Many companies offer this type of employment, so you need to check their websites individually to seek out the opportunities available.

Visit www.aapathways.com.au to:

- Get information about apprenticeship pathways
- Speak with a career adviser
- Decide which industry suits you best (take the quiz!)
- Find out about employment opportunities.



There are many pathways to get a qualification through further study including university, TAFE and specialised courses.

University

About 30 per cent of students go direct to university from school. There are however alternative pathways by transferring from recognised VET studies or undertaking bridging or foundation programs to help prepare students for university courses.

When considering going straight to university, it is important to explore course requirements including prerequisite Year 11 and 12 subjects.

There are other things to consider like the cost of university study, and associated living expenses like course materials, petrol, travel, even the possibility of needing to move out of home.

Visit the Youth Central website for a full guide on what to study and where, choosing a course and how to apply –

www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/study-and-training/university-and-tafe

Private courses

Many private education and training centres exist, offering certificates in a range of industries from administration to beauty therapy, hospitality to fitness.

It is quite easy to search the web for local courses that will lead to specific skills training by entering the job you want.

TAFE

TAFE and training courses can give you the skills to work in hundreds of industries.

This kind of training will also provide pathways for further training and better careers.

Qualifications include:

- **Certificate I** courses – basic skills that can be used in simple jobs
- **Certificate II** courses – train participants for entry-level positions or apprenticeships
- **Certificate III** courses – help develop skills, knowledge and problem-solving abilities
- **Certificate IV** courses – training for supervisory and management positions
- **Diploma** courses – skills in professional, technical or creative fields
- **Advanced Diploma** – high-level skills in technical, professional and creative fields
- **Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma** – equivalent to a university degree with Honours.

For information about TAFE courses in all states and territories visit:

Australian Capital Territory
cit.edu.au

New South Wales
tafensw.edu.au

Northern Territory
<https://www.tafecourses.com.au/courses/northern-territory/>

Queensland
qtac.edu.au

South Australia
tafesa.edu.au/courses

Tasmania
tastafe.tas.edu.au

Victoria
tafe.vic.gov.au/s/

Western Australia
fulltimecourses.tafe.wa.edu.au





Paying for ongoing study

Paying fees is a fact of life, and paying for further education is not exempt. Once you have decided on a course and where you would like to study, ensure you can cover expenses of course fees and also living costs while you study.

These are some of your options:

- Pay all fees upfront before the course starts – the dream scenario but not always achievable!
- Get a government loan – visit www.studyassist.gov.au
- Apply for a study scholarship – visit www.scholarships.org.au
- Do an apprenticeship or cadetship – www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au
- Get student income support – <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink>
- Work and study at the same time

Employment

A paid job means your own money, which can lead to freedom and the chance to learn, do new things and even help out your parents/guardians with a few of your expenses like your mobile phone or subscriptions.

Getting your first job is not always easy, and people often have to apply for a number of jobs before they are successful. Do not get discouraged, learn where you can improve and keep applying – it is like everything, as you get more experience in interviews, you will become more successful.

Finding jobs on formal advertising channels like seek.com.au, local noticeboards or newspapers are a good place to start.

However, about 80 per cent of jobs are never formally advertised so ask your friends, family members and other networks if they know of any work opportunities.

Also, make a list of the places you would like to work and just rock up and ask if there are any vacancies. This is a first-impressions situation so treat it like an interview. Dress appropriately, speak clearly and have a resume with a cover letter that you can leave behind.

When it comes to junior positions, employers are interested in employability skills that allow people to do their jobs while acknowledging the candidate may not have all the technical knowledge. In other words, employing young people is a great way for companies to be able to train staff. This means showing your potential employer that you are good at communication, teamwork and problem-solving will be a great start. Then provide examples of your initiative and planning/organisation skills and most of all, your willingness to learn. In the world we live in, technology skills across social media, web and other electronic communication will be a plus!



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www.beyondblue.org.au

1300 22 4636

Taking a gap year

A 'gap year' means taking a year off between finishing high school and starting further study or training.

A gap year might be an option if you:

- Didn't get into the course you wanted and want to take a year to reconsider your options and apply again
- Need a break from studying
- Want to get some skills and experience under your belt before embarking on a course
- Want to work and save money in preparation for more study

You can take a gap year even if you have been accepted into a course by deferring your studies.

What to do during a gap year

We are pretty sure that mum, dad, carers, even housemates, wouldn't be too keen about seeing you on the couch for a year. A gap year is a great time to do a combination of deciding your future, earning some money, discovering what you love and exploring the big wide world.

Make it a year to remember by:

Getting a paid job

Part-time or casual is fine.

Volunteering

Do this in your community to contribute.

Travelling

Explore your own state, country or head overseas for an adventure.

Doing work experience

Ask employers in your field of interest if you can do an internship for a small amount of pay or a short-term work experience stint that might help you get your foot in the door.

Studying

Consider a short course, even an online course, to get more skills and knowledge so you're ready when you start university or TAFE.



Starting a business

While your experience and qualifications may be a little light-on since you have just finished school, starting a business is always an option if you have a particular talent, skill or passion.

There are programs out there aimed at helping young people build enterprise skills and develop innovative ideas.

For ideas about starting a business visit:

New South Wales

service.nsw.gov.au/guide/start-or-grow-business-nsw

Northern Territory

nt.gov.au/industry/start-run-and-grow-a-business

Queensland

business.qld.gov.au/starting-business/planning/business-success

South Australia

business.sa.gov.au/start-your-business

Tasmania

business.tas.gov.au/starting

Victoria

business.vic.gov.au/setting-up-a-business/how-to-start-a-business

Western Australia

smallbusiness.wa.gov.au/business-advice/starting-your-business



Schoolies

Finishing school is one of the most exciting times in your life. Celebrating with your friends at schoolies is a great way to commemorate the end of your secondary schooling and mark the beginning of the next phase in your life. Every state has its own popular destinations from the Gold Coast (QLD) to Dunsborough (WA), Torquay (VIC) to Byron Bay (NSW), Scamander Beach (NT) to Victor Harbour (SA) and the incredible array of national parks in the Northern Territory. Overseas destinations are also becoming popular, like Bali and Fiji.

Visit www.schoolies.com to find out where to go and how to book your once in a lifetime celebration.



Before you go to Schoolies

It's a good idea to plan ahead. Suggestions include:

- Arrange travel insurance
- Take your Medicare card with you just in case
- Make sure you have ambulance cover and, if you have private health insurance, know what you're covered for
- Have a think about your values regarding sex, alcohol and drugs. Decide what you're prepared to do and where you will draw the line
- Have a chat to the friends you're going with to find out where you all stand. Plan ways you will look out for each other.

Safety tips for Schoolies

- Obey the house rules so you don't get kicked out of your accommodation
- Keep your hotel room locked when you're not there
- Stick with your friends and watch out for each other
- Walk to and from the main schoolies area in groups
- Never wander off alone and avoid going off with strangers
- Agree with your friends beforehand where to meet if you get separated
- Make sure your phone is charged
- Carry condoms and use them if you are having sex
- Don't drink or take drugs and drive
- Trust your senses – if you feel unsafe, move away from the situation

What to watch out for during Schoolies

Take some simple precautions so you can enjoy yourself without putting yourself or your future at risk. Some issues to be aware of include:

- **Physical injuries:** When outside, even on the beach, keep your shoes on and watch for broken glass and syringes. Don't sit down without checking behind you.
- **Drowning:** Don't drink or take drugs and swim.
- **Theft:** Don't leave your stuff unattended on the beach. Take it in turns to look after everyone's stuff.
- **Drink spiking:** Assume that anyone is capable of spiking your drink. Lots of drink spiking is actually done by people you know adding more alcohol (as opposed to other drugs) into your drink. Don't leave your drinks sitting around and if you do, ditch them and buy new drinks. Buy drinks with lids you have to open yourself and don't accept water from anyone either.
- **Sexual assault:** Going off with a stranger puts you at high risk, especially if you have been drinking, so don't go to a private place such as a hotel room with someone you don't know. Catch a cab at the end of the night rather than walking the streets.
- **Brawls:** Avoid groups of people who seem to be wandering without purpose. Violence tends to spread through a crowd, so don't hang around to watch if a brawl starts.
- **Drugs:** If you decide to take drugs, make sure you tell your friends what kind so they can give this information to ambulance officers or other medical staff in case of an overdose. Avoid mixing drugs with alcohol or other drugs.

Support services

These organisations provide information for young people and their parents and carers who may need support. They provide excellent resources, stories from people with lived experience, and information to guide better mental health in young people. Some also offer counselling and direct services.



☎ 13 92 76
🌐 www.13yarn.org.au

Confidential one-on-one yarning opportunity for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping. Speak with a Lifeline-trained Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter.



☎ 1300 22 4636
🌐 beyondblue.org.au

Beyond Blue provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live.



Butterfly
Foundation for Eating Disorders

☎ 1800 33 4673
🌐 butterfly.org.au

If you are suffering from an eating disorder, or suspect one of your friends might be, find out more and get support from the Butterfly Foundation.



☎ 1800 650 890
🌐 eheadspace.org.au

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation. They began in 2006, and ever since have provided early intervention mental health services to 12-25-year-olds.



☎ 1800 55 1800
🌐 kidshelpline.com.au

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. Qualified counsellors at Kids Helpline are available via WebChat, phone or email anytime and for any reason.



☎ 13 11 14
🌐 lifeline.org.au

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. They are committed to empowering Australians to be suicide-safe.



☎ 1800 184 527
🌐 qlife.org.au

QLife provides anonymous and free LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.




🌐 raisingchildren.net.au

The raisingchildren.net.au website is designed for Australian parents and carers. It provides up-to-date, evidence-based, scientifically validated information about raising children up to 18 years and tips for parents and carers to look after themselves. Information on this site is also relevant for teachers



🌐 reachout.com

You can also join a ReachOut Online Community forum that is free, anonymous and available 24/7 for people aged 14-25 in Australia.



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www.defence.gov.au/uxo

What's Next?



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Email: info@youthnow.org.au **Like us** on **Facebook**